



Free School Breaks
the Mold, p.2

Bolivian Uprising Bounces
Flunky Prez, p.10

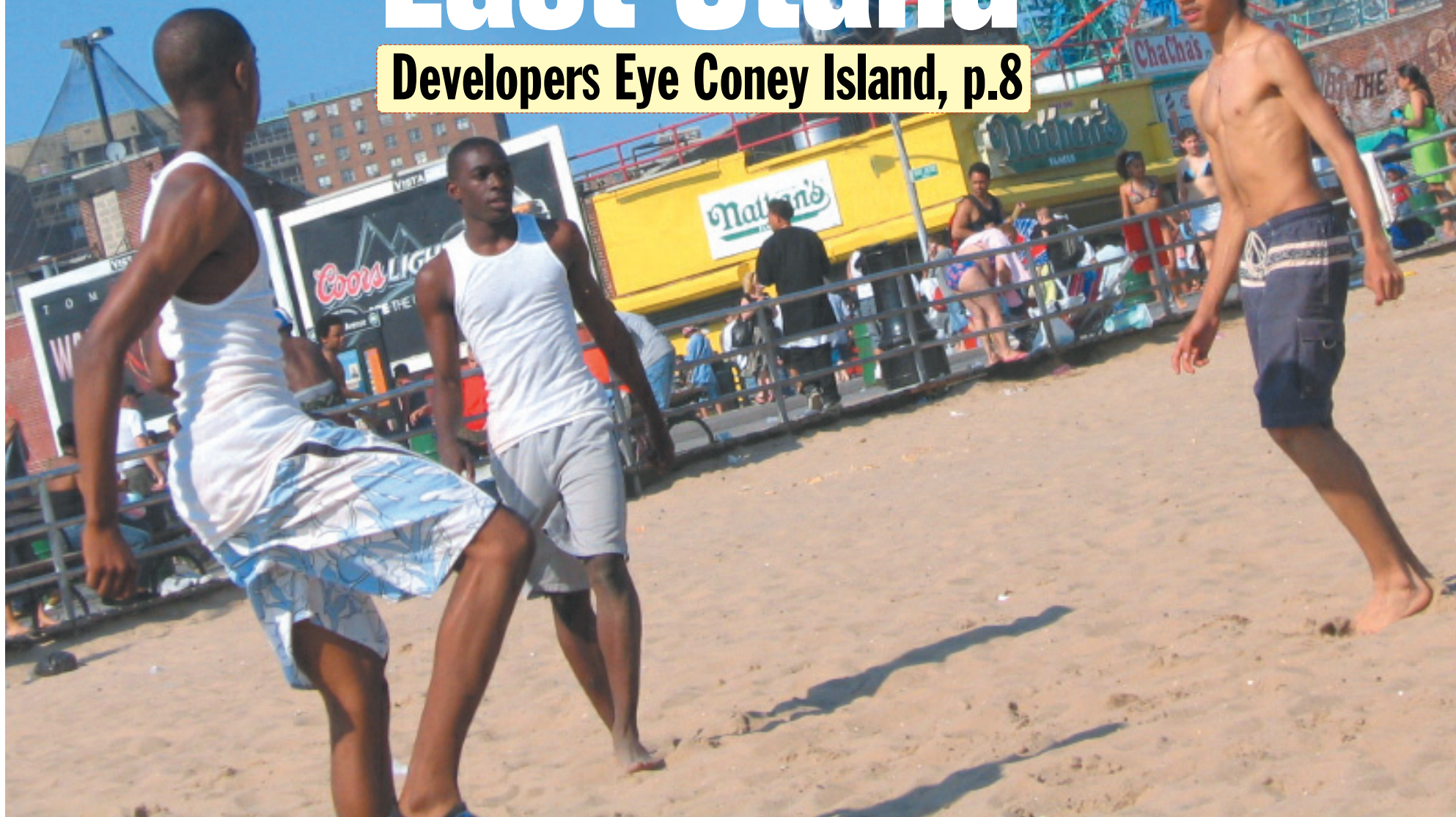
Appalachian
Eco-Action, p.5

THE INDYPENDENT

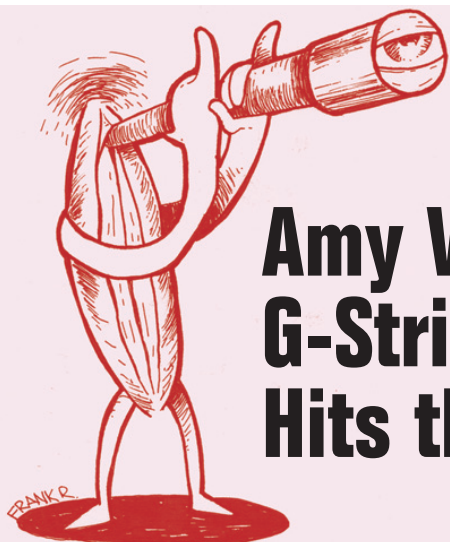
a FREE paper for free people • Issue #71, June 15 – 28, 2005

Brooklyn's Last Stand

Developers Eye Coney Island, p.8



Donald
Paneth:
Prophet
of Doom
p.10



Amy Wolf's
G-String
Hits the Spot
p.12

Blowing Up
Giuliani's Legacy...
One Bottle Rocket
at a Time p.4



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WHAT IS INDYMEDIA?

With autonomous chapters in more than 120 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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**COVER PHOTO
BY IRINA IVANOVA**

Brooklyn

Why the Free School Rules

Two months ago Gabrielle Lipner was a sophomore at John Dewey High School straining to score well on standardized tests and complete homework assignments that didn't interest her. Now she finds herself on the opposite end of the educational universe at the Brooklyn Free School.

BY JOHN TARLETON

"I was shocked at first. But it's a great place to do what you want and to pursue your dreams," says Lipner, 14, an aspiring writer who is currently working on a fictional short story about super-powerful energy drinks and an email chain letter.

"Since she's been in this school, she's been totally motivated to go," says her father, Richard Lipner. "She seems more like herself."

Located in the basement of the Free Methodist Church on the southern edge of Park Slope, the Free School is a rambunctious, easygoing refuge for kids fleeing the more structured system of learning that is the norm at most schools. There is no curriculum, no classes and no grades for the school's 29 students who range from 5-15 years old. If the kids aren't interested in what a teacher is offering, they can walk away and do something else, like play a musical instrument, start a game of charades, sample different varieties of cheese, work on a zine, walk a dog or surf the Internet.

"The primary focus of the school is to support the kid's social and emotional growth so that they are able to get in touch with their own interests and inner motivation," says Alan Berger, the Free School's founder and director.

For Berger, there is no sense of urgency about cramming information into his students' heads. Playing charades is seen as being just as valid as memorizing multiplication tables or the names of all the state capitals.

"It takes kids different amounts of time to deprogram and detox from the regular school system," Berger says. "The kids have to take responsibility for their own education. It's about you and what you want to learn."

The original free school was started in Summerhill, England in 1921. There are dozens of free schools in the United States currently, including those in Sudbury Valley, Massachusetts and Albany, New York, that have flourished since the 1960s. The core of the school is a regular meeting where students,

teachers and staff sit down as equals to set the school's course.

Berger, who worked for seven years as an assistant principal at Murray Bergstraum High School, was frustrated by the public school system's unwillingness to embrace project-based learning in place of traditional rote memorization. In October 2003, he began organizing the Free School with a notice that went out in the Park Slope Food Co-op's newsletter, and the school opened last September with 34 students and three teachers, two interns and a number of parent volunteers. Tuition is \$9,000 per year with a sliding scale for less financially advantaged families. People of color make up about half the student body, which hails from Brooklyn, Queens and Manhattan.

"I knew this was the best shot for my son," said Corrine Goodman. Her son Sylvan, 14, who was unable to function in a normal school setting, has gone from being unwilling to write to an aspiring writer working on two novels.

"This is the first time he is interacting with a community on a regular basis," Goodman said. "It's been invaluable for him."

GROWING PAINS

The process of launching the school has been a learning experience for everyone involved. Expectations that all children would flourish harmoniously in a completely free environment have been tempered by experience. In November, the school placed a cap on the number of boys after the girls expressed concerns that their needs weren't being met. The school also now has a Consequences Committee composed of a fluctuating group of about five children plus one adult that reviews



Brooklyn Free School students make their own music.
PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

complaints filed by students, staff and teachers.

"Instead of being punitive, we try to find a logical consequence to their actions," says Barbara Danish-Brown, a volunteer who works with the Consequences Committee.

"The children have been very thoughtful about what makes sense when someone breaks a school rule," Goodman adds. "I don't know whether that would have been the case in September or October."

Berger himself recently landed in front of the Consequences Committee after he chided a student for allowing her cell phone to ring during a meeting only to have his own go off several minutes later. His consequence: he was allowed to check his messages but otherwise couldn't use his cell phone inside the school for the rest of the day.

"I learned my lesson," he says.

However, the Free School's wide-open democracy has inspired some criticism from within. A couple of the older boys, Rafael and Aaron, have both urged their fellow students to elect a school president.

"We needed a school president so kids would have one person to go to with problems instead of having so many meetings," says Rafael, who would like to be president.

So far, this proposal has been voted down.

"People wanted to continue to have meetings and to have their say," Danish-Brown says.

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

BELOW 14TH ST.

Bluestockings Books & Café
172 Allen St.

Times Up!
49 E. Houston St.

Lotus Café
Clinton & Stanton Sts.

**May Day Books at Theater
for the New City**
155 First Ave. (Btw 9th & 10th Sts.)

Housing Works
126 Crosby St.

LGBT Center
213 W. 13th St.

Shakespeare & Co. Books
1 Whitehall St.

Brecht Forum
451 West St.

14TH TO 96TH ST.

Revolution Books
9 W. 19th St.

Chelsea Sq. Diner
23rd St. & 9th Ave.

Domvys
413 W. 44th

Second Wave Laundrocenter
55th St. & 9th Ave.

ABOVE 96th ST.

Labyrinth Books
536 W. 112th St.

Kim's Video
113th St. & Broadway

Coogan's Bar
169th St. & Broadway

BROOKLYN

Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.

Vox Pop
1022 Cortelyou

Green Apple Café
110 DeKalb Ave.

Marquet Patisserie
680 Fulton St.

Freddy's Bar and Backroom
Dean St. & 6th Ave.

Community Book Store
7th Ave. & Carroll Sts.

Tea Lounge
Union St. @ 7th Ave.
9th St. @ 7th Ave.

Atlantis Super Laundry Center
472 Atlantic Ave.

A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

Photoplay Video
933 Manhattan Ave.

Verb Cafe
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th

Jane Doe Books
93 Montrose Ave.

Make the Road by Walking
301 Grove St.

Spoken Word Cafe
4th Ave. & Union

QUEENS

Sunnyside Library
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

East Elmhurst Library
95-06 Astoria Blvd.

Langston Hughes Library
100-01 Northern Blvd.

Café Aubergine
49-22 Skillman Ave.

Sunnyside Library
43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

BRONX

Bronx Museum
165th St. & Grand Concourse

The Point
940 Garrison Ave.

Baychester Library
2049 Asch Loop

LONG ISLAND

Free Space
Ronkonkoma
16 E. 8th St. Huntington
Station

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PHOTO BY: CAITLIN BENEDETTO

TO BECOME INVISIBLE. To watch the action unfold. To document New York life in the subways. Street photography, underground, is as old as the tunnels. Photos by Antrim Caskey

When Cameras Are Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Have Cameras

BY JEM COHEN

On January 7th, 2005, I was filming from the window of an Amtrak train going from New York to Washington D.C., and my film was confiscated by police, due to supposed national security concerns.

I'd been shooting in 16mm, using an old, hand-wound Bolex. I was filming the passing landscape as I've often done over the past 15 years. I cannot pre-plan and attempt to obtain permits every time that I shoot; it is an inherently spontaneous act done in response to daily life and unannounced events.

I believe that it is the work and responsibility of artists to create such a record, so that we can better understand, and future generations can know, how we lived, what we build, what changes, and what disappears. Street shooting is one of the cornerstones of photography itself, and it is facing serious new threats, some declared, many not.

In New York, the MTA recently sought to forbid all unpermitted photography of and from its trains and subways. (After a public outcry and work by the New York Civil Liberties Union, which is also assisting with

my case, they have decided to back down.)

As a filmmaker, I am concerned about what this kind of clampdown means both to our livelihood and to the public, historical record. As a citizen, I am concerned about a climate in which a person can be pulled off of a train and have their property confiscated without warning or redress.

Does stopping us from photographing a bridge make us safer when anybody can search the internet and see countless photographs of the same bridge? Are all of those photographs to be somehow suppressed? Given that anyone can purchase a hidden camera device with a lens the size of a shirt button, are the people openly taking pictures such an actual threat? What about all of those cell phones with cameras?

Under the rubric of an endless "war on terror," we are seeing the denigration of due process, free speech, and the right to privacy, which are crucial safeguards of a free and democratic society.

Jem Cohen is a Brooklyn-based filmmaker whose work includes *Instrument*, *Benjamin Smoke* and *Chain*. Excerpted from *Filmmaker Magazine*.

Summer Nights

ONE MORE TIME FOR THE 9 TRAIN

BY XAVIER TAYO, MATT WASSERMAN

Freelance urban reclamation continues. The night of June 9, partiers train-jacked the uptown 1 train in carnival protest of the MTA's recent elimination of the 9 train. Starting at South Street Ferry, artists with *ActionDirection.org* transformed a 1 train into a 9 train, covering the MTA's house ads and corporate propaganda with fresh roses and "one more time for the 9" logos. Proving that the best parties are free, the uptown Broadway local was transformed into a rail-mounted guerilla party.

According to the Straphangers Campaign, the replacement of the 9 train by the 1 train along the nearly 15 miles of its route will add at least five minutes to the commute of Bronx residents. But on the night of June 9, that

meant five more minutes of revelry.

Organizer Gideon Levy led chants and encouraged everyone to boogie down. Riders flirted and drank as beads of sweat rolled down their faces. Dance music emanated from a boom box and partygoers were swinging from the poles.

As the train moved northward, the party grew with each stop. Over 200 people were packed into the last two subway cars as they emerged from the tunnels and the lights of Manhattan were seen from the elevated tracks. Riders socialized into the Bronx and then moved on to party in Van Cortlandt Park into the small hours of the night. Kim Frankel, who just moved to NYC last week, said "It was the best party I've ever been to."

From the *nyc.indymedia.org* newswire

According to a May 27 ruling by New York's highest court, **Mayor Jason West of New Paltz will face criminal prosecution for violating domestic relations law when he officiated at the weddings of 24 same-sex couples in 2004.** West faces a maximum of 24 years in prison and thousands of dollars in fines for multiple misdemeanor counts if convicted.

Green Party leaders have called the prosecution of Mayor West, a Green, politically motivated. Ulster County District Attorney Don Williams did not seek reinstatement of charges

against two Unitarian ministers who also conducted more than a dozen same-sex weddings in New Paltz. **Mayor Gavin Newsom** of San Francisco conducted a few thousand weddings. The weddings were held to be invalid and ordered to be stopped, but no charges were ever filed against Newsom, a Democrat.

The initial legal effort against Mayor West was led by Liberty Counsel, which serves as the legal arm of Jerry Falwell ministries.

On June 9, Counter-recruiters leafleted three New York high

schools that had received attention from military recruiters. About 20 people from **United for Peace & Justice, Campus Antiwar Network, Educators against the War** and other groups handed out flyers **warning students** of the tactics used by military recruiters and the **realities of military service.**

Hundreds of people marched from Brooklyn to Manhattan on June 8 to protest **Forest City Ratner's proposal for 20 high rises** and a sports arena in **Prospect Heights**, Brooklyn. The march started at Brooklyn's Borough Hall and con-

cluded with a rally at City Hall.

Opponents to the proposal contend that it's a **sweetheart deal** involving **\$1.6 billion** in public subsidies, the use of Eminent Domain for a private developer and a construction plan vastly out of scale with the surrounding community. Many marchers saw Ratner's plan as part of a more general pattern of **billionaire** developers pursuing their construction plans without any regard to how it will affect local communities.

Hundreds of veterans, along with family and friends of soldiers marched solemnly through Battery Park on May 29th, Veterans Day, with a single message: **honor the dead and fight to bring the living home now.** The procession began with an observance at the New York City Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Waters Street and culminated in a ceremony along the Battery Park waterfront, where Veterans and mourning families cast yellow roses in memory of their fallen loved ones into New York harbor.

A Loo of One's Own

BY TAMIKO BEYER

Dean Spade was followed into a Grand Central men's bathroom by a police officer who demanded to see his ID, pushed him against a wall and then arrested him as he tried to leave. Pauline Park emerged from the women's bathroom in the Manhattan Mall and found herself surrounded by security guards who demanded to know whether she was a man or a woman.

Such incidents illustrate the need for safe access to bathrooms and other sex-segregated facilities for transgender and genderqueer people. New York City activists are both working to end the discrimination that transgender people face when using sex-segregated bathrooms, and advocating for more gender-neutral bathrooms.

Opponents of gender-neutral bathrooms play on "a generalized fear of a male rapist putting on a dress to go into a women's room," says Park, chair of the New York Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA). "I've never heard of such a case. In fact, it is transgender people who are vulnerable to harassment and assault whether they use the women's or men's bathrooms."

Park noted that gender-neutral bathrooms benefit not just transgender people, but also caretakers of children, elderly and disabled people of the opposite sex.

The New York City Council passed a transgender rights bill in 2002, after a campaign led by NYAGRA. The bill amended New York City human rights law to explicitly

protect transgender and gender-variant people from discrimination under city law for the first time. In 2004, the New York City Commission released the Human Rights Guidelines Regarding Gender Identity Discrimination – legally binding regulations that specifically articulate the statute's application in particular situations, such as the use of public bathrooms. Park and another transgender woman who brought complaints against the security firm at the Manhattan Mall won the first publicly announced settlement in a case of transgender-related discrimination since the adoption of these guidelines.

Riley Snorton, founder of All Gender Bathrooms NYC, says the guidelines are just the beginning.

"The amazing aspect of this work is that you get to be an integral part of your community by making requests of places that you patronize to let them know that their facilities are a problem," says Snorton.

Snorton envisions that most of this work will take place in communities of color and include places not traditionally considered when policies such as the Human Rights Law are implemented: homeless shelters and community spaces, for example. He wants to collaborate with homeless advocates who are also working on bathroom accessibility.

Other efforts to create safe bathrooms in New York City include the work of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP), an organization fighting discrimination against gender non-conforming people. SRLP staff conducts trainings throughout the country, and has collaborated with a transgender filmmaker to produce *Toilet Training*. This film addresses the persistent discrimination, harassment and violence that people who transgress gender norms face in gender-segregated bathrooms.

SRLP is currently working with the Human Resources Administration (HRA) – a department of the New York City government that encompasses hundreds of agencies and offices – to create a best-practices guide for transgender clients and employees.

"SRLP believes that the priority is to start with the state," says Dean Spade, SRLP staff attorney. "State discrimination affects the most vulnerable people, such as prisoners and homeless people who live in or access facilities where the Human Rights Law might not apply."

LIGHT UP THE SKY THIS 4TH OF JULY

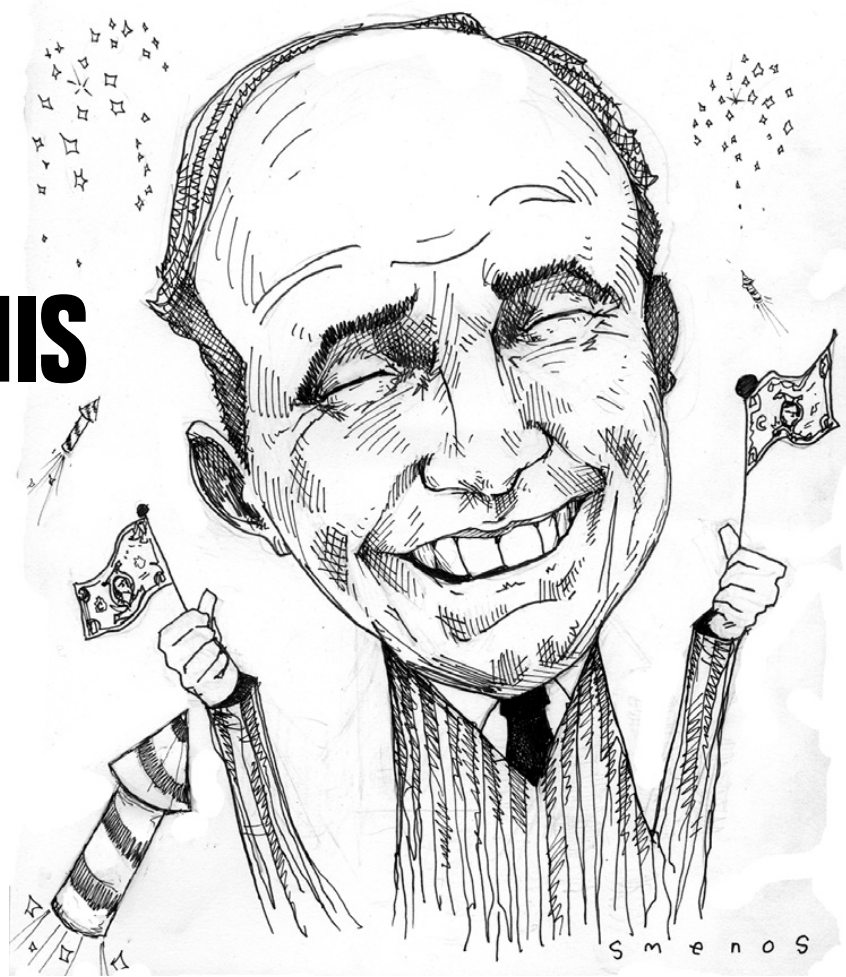
BY JED BRANDT

It was supposed to be a free country. Then they came for the dancers. Giuliani's enforcement of the city's archaic cabaret laws that technically ban dancing in bars without the proper permits must have made even history's hardest tyrants chuckle in their graves. The thin line between a casual gyration over cocktails and a party girl going buckwild on a tabletop compelled many clubs, under threat of a city padlock, to enforce a strict "no rhythmic movement" rule on drunken patrons. This was no fun at all, and even worse, people put up with it. As long as the white middle classes got what they wanted, which they kind of did, they tolerated Giuliani's neurotic program of total social control. His quality of life initiatives banned everything from begging to gay cruising in the Rambles. The historical home of American liberty when the rest of the country groaned under banality and preachers, New York in the Giuliani Era morphed into a shopping-mall authoritarianism where any minor altercation with the law promised at least an

Getting the Goods:

New York and New Jersey are two of only five states in the country that ban all commercial fireworks. The best local options for quick purchase both involve a road trip.

Connecticut has "safe and sane" limitations on fireworks which keep the heavy incendiaries under control. Fireworks are actually dangerous, so for side-street shows, these should be fine. But if you're planning on hitting the beach (or Prospect Park), **Pennsylvania** is distinguished as the only state in the Northeast that includes the full range of cylindrical and cone fountains, mines and shells, sky rockets, firecrackers and "helicopter-type rockets."



overnight trip to the Tombs, if not a plunger in the ass, or 41 bullets. But of all Giuliani's anal antics, perhaps the most manifestly insane was his ban on fireworks.

In the weeks leading up to July 4, when New York was New York, roman candles, bottle rockets and the endless ripple of firecrackers, punctuated by M-80 boom, used to fill all five boroughs. Chinatown locals spent weeks wading knee-deep through shredded paper jackets. The smell of gunpowder was the herald of summer. "Rockets' red glare" is how America celebrates its independence from the dread British, and how the Chinese celebrate pretty much anything at all.

But tradition be damned! Giuliani's philosophy only had love for money and order – the spirit of independence didn't fit in his campaign against "broken windows." Small infractions were what gave New Yorkers the feeling of autonomy, so the power of the state was brought down with particular ferocity on the little things. Chinatown was pissed when he enforced the anti-fireworks ordinance; other people grumbled. But as with so much during Giuliani's reign, most just shrugged it off and went back to work to pay their jacked-up rents. His strategy of cracking down on minor infractions to enforce social discipline worked. He

was right: If you send enough people to jail, they'll learn to fear freedom. A whole generation of kids came of age learning to do what they were told.

But the era of the tight-ass is finally starting to give. First there were the smoke-easies. Small bars downtown now flaunt the city's smoking regulations in the late-night hours. Then casual dancing returned as party-goers picked up that Bloomberg, while continuing the corporate fellation of Giuliani, doesn't get off on poking fingers in our eyes quite like his predecessor. The more people see what we can get away with, the more a casual ethos of freedom spreads.

It's time to up the ante by celebrating our independence in the best way we can: It's time to blow things up. In 2004, the FDNY received a ten-fold increase in fireworks noise complaints on July 4 over the year before. This June, fireworks are already on the up tick with nightly, though still sporadic, bottle rockets launching from rooftops and backstreets. All it takes to join the fun and do your part for freedom is one friend with a car, an empty trunk and a proper appreciation that bigger is better. If the cops are intent on treating us all like children, then we might as well act like it. Setting off fireworks isn't just a way to celebrate a hypocritical holiday; it's a fun way to declare our independence in fact, not ritual.



RIDE BILLY RIDE

Reverend Billy performs at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery during a May 27 benefit for Critical Mass. The monthly bike ride, which took place earlier in the evening, drew about a thousand participants. There were 12 arrests. The next Critical Mass is Friday, June 24, starting on the north side of Union Square at 7p.m.

For more, criticalmassrides.info

PHOTO: CAITLIN BENEDETTO

“MY MOTHER GAVE ME BIRTH, THE LAND GIVES ME LIFE.” Larry Gibson’s family has lived on Kayford Mountain in Raleigh County, West Virginia for generations. After 20 years of coal companies blasting off mountain tops and filling the surrounding valleys with the rubble, Kayford has been almost flattened. The culprits, Massey Energy once told Gibson that “he’s the diamond, they’re the ring.” Along with scores of others throughout the state, Gibson is fighting back.

PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY



Bringing Down The Mountain Killers

BY RAHUL CHADHA

In the beginning, the Juliana Coal Company was friendly enough. First they sent a lawyer out to visit Doyle Coakley on his 278-acre farm in rural Webster County, West Virginia. The coal company’s representative promised money, and lots of it, in exchange for the right to excise the coal that lay in seams under the wooded land. “The lawyer came ‘round and told me, ‘I figure we can make you about a millionaire,’” recalls Coakley.

The farmer refused entreaties to either sell his property outright, or lease the mineral rights for a percentage of the coal profits. Like the man who owned the land before him, Coakley wasn’t interested in destroying his farm for a quick buck. “I told [the previous owner] I wouldn’t let them strip it, I gave him my word on it. To turn the land into a garbage dump,” says Coakley, “I wouldn’t have sold it to them for anything.”

Undeterred, the company moved on to the land next to Coakley’s, relying on a stretch of county road running through his farm as the main artery for their trucks to ferry both coal and waste, often times dumping sludge six inches deep in front of Coakley’s home. But instead of shrinking away from a fight, the West Virginia native took them on, presenting his case before the various state agencies charged with enforcing laws regarding the processes of mining, only to find he had few allies, even among those whose duty it was to protect the interests of the average citizen. Even so, the law was enough, for a little while at least, to give him some victories.

It was then that the harassment started. Windows on his rural farm were shot out. Livestock were found on his property, dead from gunshot wounds. There were the phone

calls that came in the dead of night, and the thinly veiled threats about a farm burning to the ground. Once, when the window on his truck was shot at on a Friday night, Coakley called the state troopers. They showed up three days later. “It’s the climate of the state,” he says with resignation. “If you’re against the coal company, no one is with you.”

The sorts of strong-arm tactics the residents of mountainous Appalachia have had to endure are chilling, as if someone had taken the plot of a prohibition-era Mafia movie and re-set it in the rural hills of Southeast America. Much like the seams of coal that run dark veins through the mountains of Appalachia, the ties between the coal industry and the state and local governments charged with policing them run hard and deep, and well-hidden from the sunlight.

BRINGING THE MOUNTAINTOP LOW

The days of men boring holes into the earth to extract coal are long over. Modern technology has made it much more cost-efficient for coal companies to simply blast away the tops of mountains to extract the coal underneath, in the process decimating existing forests and the very mountains themselves.

First, the forests – ecosystems of hardwood trees that support not only a wide range of plants, but a number of woodland animals as well – fall before the bulldozers. Mountain peaks that exist as part of a 680-million-year-old range are sheared off with explosives, the resulting rubble dumped into valleys, burying miles of environmentally crucial fresh water streams.

Giant machines known as draglines, some as tall as 20 stories, tear into what’s left of the mountain to expose the coal. In a number of documented cases, the resulting erosion has

wreaked havoc on its surroundings. Small towns, nestled at the foot of the mountains, have been buried in silt as a result of landslides. Creeks have turned bright green, infused with poisonous heavy metals leached from the rocks above. The entire process turns a healthy, self-sustaining ecosystem into what is often described as dead moonscape. Whereas legions of men were once needed to pull coal from the earth, all this devastation can be accomplished with the hands of no more than a dozen men.

THE GOOD FIGHT

Opposition to mountaintop removal mining practices that was once scattershot is coalescing. There are now a slew of groups in various Appalachian states organizing against today’s coal-mining robber barons and the attending political influence and cronyism their wads of cash have purchased.

Jim Hecker, a lawyer with the non-profit Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, has brought around half a dozen civil suits against various coal companies and the public agencies charged with regulating them. The lawsuits are often complex, with lawyers from different groups serving as counsel for the disparate grassroots organizations fighting the coal companies. In one past case, Hecker and other lawyers represented local opposition groups such as Coal River Mountain Watch and the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition in a lawsuit brought against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which authorizes permits for surface mining operations. “It’s a huge amount of litigation to describe,” says Hecker.

The ties between local and state government agencies and the coal mining companies sometimes leave outsiders unable to distinguish between the two. “Enforcement [of coal mining regulations] is weak, and the regulators are

captives of the coal industry,” says Hecker. “[Government agencies] treat the coal mining industry as their constituents, and not their citizens. There’s also a systemic problem in that federal and state agencies have ignored the rules, and when we point this out, they simply change them.”

Some local activists have not been content to wait for decisions to be handed down through the courts while the mountains are falling low. Taking their cue from Southern civil rights movements of the ‘60s, a group of green-minded individuals have declared this season Mountain Justice Summer. In late May the group hosted a five-day camp, which netted about 100 people, aimed at gathering activists together and teaching them about non-violent strategies and skills to oppose the mining. “We have a real solid core of people that are all interested in learning and doing whatever they can to work on this issue,” said Sarah, one of the organizers of the Mountain Justice Summer.

Participants have already held several rallies at permit hearings, and 16 activists were arrested on May 31 while attempting to deliver their demands for the cessation of strip mining to Massey Energy, a company that produced 41 million tons of coal in 2003, according to their own website. Local press have picked up on the issue, providing supportive coverage to activists’ efforts, said Sarah, who credits the resulting attention for the recent outreach by the West Virginia governor’s office to Coal River Mountain Watch. “The facts just aren’t on [the coal companies] side,” she argued. “It just seems ridiculous to me that one of their biggest defenses is that we’re just being emotional. I mean, how can you listen to some of these stories and not be horrified?”

For more info, see mountainjusticesummer.org

Meet the Real Deep Throat

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Ah, the delicious irony of Mark Felt's career! The man who denounced the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) "interfering with government work" and "helping criminals," becomes, through his misdeeds, the spur for a generation of laws strengthening public oversight of the Executive Branch of government.

Felt not only took it upon himself to employ any means necessary to bring in the Weather Underground, but in his megalomania, he took aim at President Nixon who passed him over for a promotion to FBI Director. It was he, as "Deep Throat," who revealed to the *Washington Post* that the Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP) was wiretapping their Democratic opponents in the Watergate Hotel.

In his penchant for lawlessness, Felt author-

THE PEOPLE'S LAWYER

ized at least five warrantless break-ins of homes of relatives and acquaintances of members of the WU, the 1970s group that took credit for bombings of the Capitol and Pentagon in retaliation for U.S. actions in Chile, Angola and Vietnam. He and co-conspirator Edward S. Miller were indicted by a federal grand jury in 1978 for violation of constitutional rights, and convicted in a lukewarm prosecution. Felt and Miller called Nixon to testify on their behalf and say that all presidents since FDR authorized the Bureau to conduct break-ins for intelligence and counterespionage operations. They were fined a total of \$8,500 and later granted full and unconditional pardons by incoming President Reagan.

Felt and Miller were the only FBI agents convicted for their COINTELPRO activities, and their crimes are just the tip of the iceberg. The sister of WU leader Bernadine Dohrn used the FOIA to get her 200,000-

page FBI file and learned that a plan had been discussed to kidnap her newborn baby in hopes that this would persuade Bernadine to surface from hiding. "Breathless" actress Jean Seberg delivered a still-born and later committed suicide after rumors were planted by the FBI that she was pregnant by a member of the Black Panther Party, rather than her husband. "Neutralizing" the Black Panthers was the primary and successful objective of COINTELPRO. Historian Lawrence Wittner writes, "By 1969, dozens of Black Panthers had been killed by police and one hundred others imprisoned, virtually wiping out the leadership of the organization."

The Watergate revelations led to major governmental reforms, including the passage of the 1974 Privacy Act and the strengthening of the FOIA and the now-expired Independent Counsel Act. The Office of the Inspector General Act of 1978 established an Inspector General in each federal agency that

is required to investigate all complaints of misconduct received and to report to Congress every six months. A recent fruit of this law was DOJ Inspector General Glenn Fine's excellent investigation into the detention conditions of the thousands of Muslims rounded up in the months following September 11.

Interviewed in 1976, Mark Felt said he was just being made a "scapegoat" for the bureau. Although he admitted his black bag jobs were "extralegal," he also said his cause was "justified, and I'd do it again tomorrow."

Unfortunately, the American public seems to have slipped back into pre-Watergate credulity, imagining that their government would never lie to them. May Mark Felt and his crimes be long remembered.

The People's Lawyer is a project of the National Lawyers Guild, NYC Chapter. Contact the chapter at nlgnyc.org or at (212) 679-6018.

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CAFTA

CAFTA on the Skids

BY SUSAN CHENELLE

Mary Sandoval immigrated to the United States 10 years ago "to improve [her] life" and find better opportunities. Before she left Guatemala, she had studied business administration and worked as an accountant. For the last eight years she has made dresses and suits for Leigh Max Fashions in the Garment District, and has seen the effects of so-called "free trade" firsthand. Now that Congress is considering ratification of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), she is speaking out.

"If CAFTA passes, we will lose more jobs," she says. "Factories will get richer and workers will be exploited. Here in New York, we won't have jobs, so we won't be able to help our families back home."

CAFTA is similar to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) signed 10 years ago by the U.S., Mexico and Canada. CAFTA lowers trade barriers between the seven signatory countries: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and the U.S. The agreement was signed in May 2004, and Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador have since ratified it, but it has languished in the U.S. Congress amid increasingly contentious debate.

RACING TO THE BOTTOM

When NAFTA was being debated in the early nineties, opponents predicted an ugly "race to the bottom" in which factories would exploit both workers and the environment in order to cut production costs and to keep their contracts with brand-name multinationals like Nike and the Gap. With tariffs and trade quotas eliminated, corporations would be able to move production wherever it was cheapest. Ten years later, it has become clear that this is exactly what has happened.

With so much textile manufacturing already having moved to China and Southeast Asia, Central American factory owners welcome CAFTA in hopes that it will allow them to compete a bit better, due to the comparatively friendlier terms they will have with the U.S. However, critics warn that the trade agreement will simply give owners greater incentive to exploit workers while flooding Central American markets with U.S. agricultural exports.

Sandoval herself fears that the conditions in the textile factory in which her sister-in-law works in Guatemala will get worse. Workers there are already compelled to work 12-hour days with no overtime, she says, because the factory doors are locked at 7 a.m., and not opened until as late as 7 or 9 p.m. Unions are forbidden, and workers receive no benefits.

Congressional Republican leaders would like to get CAFTA ratified by the end of June, but it seems increasingly doubtful that that will happen. Supporters will not introduce a ratification bill until they are sure they have enough votes to pass it. They currently face opposition from Democrats who criticize the lack of labor and environmental protections, as well as from Republicans from states that depend on the sugar and/or textiles industries.

Many of these opponents are historic supporters of trade liberalization, so the switch might seem like a sign of the influence of the growing global movement against such agreements. However, activists are well aware of the likelihood that politicians may be just holding out in order to cut side deals to mitigate the effects of CAFTA upon their constituencies.

GOING ON THE RECORD

Burke Stansbury of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) said the group's strategy now is "to get as many people on the record" as possible with their opposition. Rep. Charles Rangel, whose district includes Washington Heights, condemned the version of CAFTA pushed by the Bush administration in a May 27 statement: "The Administration refuses to include even the most basic standards of common decency and fairness for working people."

Rep. Jose Serrano of the Bronx issued this statement on his website on May 20: "All of us want to help develop the economies of Latin America, but DR-CAFTA promises to do more damage than good, both for workers and the national economies of the United States and the Latin American nations affected." Congressman Gregory Meeks of Queens has said that he remains "decidedly undecided."

Business interests have been sending busloads of people to Washington to lobby in support of CAFTA. The *New York Times* weighed in on May 31 with an editorial urg-



OPPONENTS OF CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (CAFTA) gathered June 1 at Centro Tamboiril in Washington Heights for a benefit on behalf of the People's Referendum on Free Trade.

PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

ing ratification. In a recent speech, Gov. George Pataki expressed his fears that CAFTA would not be approved.

Mock mark-up in the Senate Finance Committee is scheduled for mid-June but it remains unclear whether or not the legislation will make it out of the committee with a positive recommendation. Observers believe that CAFTA proponents are about 30 votes shy in the House.

Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua are unlikely to move toward ratification until it passes in the U.S. Congress. They do not want to risk the protests that have rocked Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador over ratification.

Many politicians have bemoaned the agreement's lack of environmental and labor protections, and some have demanded that certain contentious provisions be removed. However, such calls are mostly hot air, since Congress can't revise the agreement and may only vote "yea" or "nay" on the deal. If CAFTA does come up for a vote, the moment of truth will be when its current critics show whether or not they are willing to stand up to globalization's powerful proponents and vote against it.

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Supremes Spare Rent Regs



BY STEVEN WISHNIA

On May 23, the Supreme Court reversed a lower-court decision that could have established a legal precedent to invalidate rent controls and a host of other economic regulations, from minimum-wage laws to environmental ordinances.

The Court unanimously ruled that a 1997 Hawaii law limiting how much rent oil companies could charge gas station owners was constitutional. Chevron had challenged the measure, contending that it violated the Constitution's "takings" clause, which prohibits the government from taking private property without fair compensation.

"It is a major victory for rent regulation," says veteran tenant lawyer Timothy L. Collins, former executive director of the city Rent Guidelines Board. "The Court explicitly disavowed the exercise of second-guessing the purposes of state legislatures adopting rent regulations."

The key legal issue in the case, *Chevron v. Lingle*, was what standard should be used to judge whether laws constituted an unfair

“The case is a major victory for rent regulation by explicitly disavowing the second-guessing of state legislatures’ purposes in adopting such regulation.”

“taking.” Since the 1920s, courts have noted that government regulations could be considered a taking if they placed an unfair burden on property owners. Chevron argued that the Hawaii rent-control law should be considered a taking, because it did not “substantially advance” a legitimate state interest. The federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed.

The Supreme Court rejected that contention, saying it would force the courts to review “virtually any regulation of private property” and then decide whether such rules were effective, in order to judge if they were constitutional. That would “require courts to scrutinize the efficacy of a vast array of state and federal regulations – a task for which courts are not well suited,” Justice Sandra Day O’Connor wrote.

“Moreover, it would empower – and might often require – courts to substitute their predictive judgments for those of elected legislatures and expert agencies.”

Instead, the Court held, a regulation can only be judged a taking if it puts an unfair burden on property owners, if “its effect is tantamount to a direct appropriation” of property, or if its burden is not equitably shared among property owners.

Hawaii enacted the law in 1997 because the state, with only 300 gas stations, six gasoline wholesalers and two refineries, had some of the highest gas prices in the nation. About one-fifth of the state's gas stations are leased from Chevron by individual owners, and among the law's main supporters were former owners priced out by rent increases. "The reason why the state passed the rent cap was because we had argued all along in the Legislature that the oil companies were using economic eviction," Frank Young told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin. "They would raise the rates so high that all the dealers would go out of business because the dealers could not

afford to pay the rent and would have to leave. Then the companies would take control of the market through company-operated stations.”

Chevron did not claim that the rent-control law prevented it from making a profit. Instead, it argued that the law had failed to advance the state's interest in keeping gas prices down, because the company had raised its wholesale prices to make up for the lost rental income.

'EXTREME' PROPERTY RIGHTS

The case was also closely watched by the judicial far right. Groups such as the Federalist Society and the Pacific Legal Foundation (which filed an amicus brief supporting Chevron) have been working to expand the legal reach of property rights radically, in order to eliminate government regulations on

rents, occupational safety and the environment. Since 1937, courts have generally held such regulations constitutional, but pre-New Deal courts used the takings clause to strike down laws against child labor and union-busting. One key case was the Supreme Court's 1905 decision in *Lochner v. New York*, in which it held that a New York State law setting a 10-hour maximum workday for bakers interfered with workers' and employers' freedom to agree on contracts.

"The real significance is that regulatory-takings jurisprudence was starting to slide back to *Lochner*-era philosophy," says Collins. "The Court put the brakes on that." In a 1994 case, *Manocheirian v. Lenox Hill Hospital*, he notes, New York State's highest court used the "substantially advances" test to strike down a state law that kept apartments under rent regulation if a hospital rented them from private landlords and then sublet them to employees.

What Collins calls an “extremist” definition of property rights is a main component of President Bush’s efforts to pack the courts with far-right ideologues, such as California Supreme Court Justice Janice Rogers Brown, who in 2000 told the Federalist Society that Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’ dissent in *Lochner* was “annoying.”

Judge Brown was recently approved for the DC Circuit Court of Appeals as a result of the Senate Democrats' filibuster compromise. In a 2002 California case, Brown was the sole dissenter against upholding a San Francisco law levying a fee on owners who convert their hotels from residential to transient, with the money being used to fund affordable housing. She wrote that it was "turning democracy into a kleptocracy." In another case where she was the sole dissenter, Brown declared that rent control was a taking, and said it was as offensive as racial discrimination.

Collins believes the Chevron ruling will hold up, even if Bush appointees fill the courts. "The fact that this is a 9-0 decision seems to be a fatal blow to the property-rights extremists," he says. "I think this decision is going to stand for a very long time."

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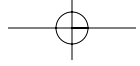
CAMPAÑA CONTRA INMIGRANTES INDOCUMENTADOS: ANTES Y DESPUÉS

¿Política o xenofobia?

POK CLARA NIVETO

El Estado-policial que promueve la administración Bush-Cheney busca perpetuar las condiciones de desigualdad y explotación de millones de inmigrantes sin papeles.

A primera medida que tomó Alberto González (el antiguo mexicano) al asumir el cargo de Fiscal General, responsable de la Justicia en EE.UU., en 2001, fue la de ordenar a los jueces que, en el futuro, y debido a su enorme influencia en la política y la migración mexicana. Sin demoras, y durante el siguiente año, los jueces de la corte federal de los Estados Unidos, en un intento de demostrar su independencia y su compromiso con la justicia, emitieron una serie de decisiones que, en su mayoría, se centraron en la protección de los derechos de los inmigrantes. Estas decisiones, que se emitieron en un momento en el que la inmigración mexicana estaba sufriendo una crisis, fueron recibidas con entusiasmo por la comunidad inmigrante y por los defensores de los derechos humanos. Sin embargo, a pesar de estas decisiones, la situación de los inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos sigue siendo precaria. La administración Bush-Cheney ha continuado con una política de endurecimiento de las leyes migratorias, lo que ha llevado a una mayor explotación de los inmigrantes sin papeles. La política de Bush-Cheney ha sido criticada por ser xenofóbica y por promover la explotación de los inmigrantes. La comunidad inmigrante y los defensores de los derechos humanos continúan luchando por la justicia y la igualdad para todos los habitantes de los Estados Unidos.



TOP: **THE SIDESHOW THEATER**, home of Coney Island, USA, which plays host to Eak the Geek, The Human Block Head, Sword-Swallowing, Insectavora, and more.
BOTTOM: **PERFORMING “AIRPLANES”** in front of the Boardwalk.

PHOTOS BY IRINA IVANOVA



DICK ZIGUN, founder of the Mermaid Parade and founder of Coney Island, USA

Bland as Sand

DEVELOPERS STALK CONEY ISLAND

BY HALLEY BONDY

Coney Island doesn't compete with Great Adventure in terms of cleanliness — and middle-class mediocrity — but we offer a different and very unique experience,” says Dick Zigun, president of Coney Island USA.

Zigun and his organization have been a major force behind Coney Island's revitalization. Coney Island USA is behind the sideshow, the museum, the burlesque show, the annual Mermaid Parade, and “anything creative” that happens on the island. The arts nonprofit was formed in 1983 and is funded by private arts and cultural foundations, public government donors and local businesses.

Zigun declares the whole spirit of Coney Island is rooted in the historic amusement parks and his establishment, which he unabashedly claims to own “one hundred percent.”

Indeed, Coney Island exhibits the rarest of cultural commodities — authenticity. Whether it's the glorious trashiness, the primitive levers of the Cyclone that hold your life in the balance, the carnival art, the intense and diverse crowds or the vintage boardwalk.

But amid attractions ranging from electric chairs to sword-swallowers, a new concern looms over Coney Island. The mayor-appointed Coney Island Development Corporation (CIDC) has drawn up plans to develop many of the amusement area's vacant lots. With property values skyrocketing, residents, beach goers, small-business owners and arts organizations are wondering how they factor in the development plans.

The city's hazy plans coupled with even hazier private enterprise leaves the future of Zigun's arts organization and Coney Island itself a mystery. After 22 years, Coney Island USA has become a fixture in

the community and in local politics, but Zigun is struggling with a rent hike and his landlords' refusal to offer a customary 10-year renewal lease.

‘EVERYTHING IS FOR SALE’
“There are no leases left in Coney Island. Everything is for sale... and if property keeps going up per square foot, imagine maintaining a large theater and museum space,” laments Zigun.

But almost two years after Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced plans to develop Coney Island, the oceanfront neighborhood is still in limbo. “Everything's up in the air,” says Zigun.

Even residents of the community know only what they've read: “I probably know as much as you,” says Mike, a resident of a housing project on Surf Avenue, who adds that his monthly rent increased \$300 last year alone.

Michael Harari, a broker for Massey Knakal Realty, told the *Brooklyn Papers* that vacant lots have doubled in price since last year.

In the meantime, small businesses along Surf Avenue have been bought up by Thor Equities, a developer that specializes in building malls.

Though the future of Coney Island is uncertain, many small business managers know the end is near.

The Go-Kart track on 12th street is among the facilities that will have to abandon their locations by the end of this summer under Thor's command, but seven-year manager Charlie “Go-Karts” (and his iguana, Baby) remain in high spirits. “Hey, it's a shame that some people have to go, but it's good to have development.

“We'll have new restaurants and no doubt McDonald's is going to have a foot in the door, but it has to happen.” Charlie is also a mechanic for the Wonderwheel, Coney Island's famed Ferriswheel, so he is “not completely out of luck.”

KNISH TODAY, APPLEBEE'S TOMORROW?

But others, like “Joey Clams,” manager of a bought out gyro stand, expressed great dismay when he heard the news. He asked the *Daily News*: “Are they going to take us out and replace us with an Applebee's or Olive Garden? Knishes, hot dogs, shish kebab — that's what makes Coney Island.”

Rumor has it that Thor has an indoor waterpark up its sleeve. The Astella Development Corporation, a Coney Island nonprofit, released a “Vision Plan” for the amusement area in mid-2003 that also promotes a water park.

After quietly buying up property and ousting businesses, Thor remains tight-lipped about the future of Coney Island. Thor President and CEO Joseph J. Sitr has yet to reveal the company's plan, only saying that it would “help restore Coney Island to its position as America's favorite family destination.”

Representative Lee Silberstein adds “We'll be happy to share the plans once they are further along.”

Charles Denson, author of *Coney Island Lost and Found*, told *The Independent* that he feels the development is inevitable. “Coney Island has always been in transition, it's been written off so many times... I know they're taking Coney into account because they have the greatest brand name. To not take advantage of it is a mistake, but to keep a historical component is important. I'm not talking about nostalgia but creativity. This is where it all started. There is fertile ground here.”

“It's better not to have vacant lots,” said Denson. “I think that if Thor works with the community that exists now — for example, help bring about this amazing revival with the Mermaid Parade — they'd smooth things over. They came in strong but have been working with a few concessionaires.” Indeed, Lolastar, a creative T-shirt stand on the boardwalk, has been

promised space within the Thor footprint after its lease was cancelled.

“Here you have a real mixture, not corporate, not ‘Disneyfied,’” continued Denson. “Some businesses give Coney a bad name, but others, like Coney Island USA who are losing their buildings don't deserve it. I hope that Thor considers a performance space.”

CITY PLANS

In 2003, Mayor Bloomberg, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, and the City Council birthed the Coney Island Development Corporation, a 13-member board involving everyone from the chief of the Economic Development Corporation, a public corporation that promotes economic growth, to City Council members and local residents.

The CIDC aims to revitalize existing attractions, smooth over transportation and attract private investors. The board said the area's strengths include beach property and historic attractions, while its weaknesses are rundown facilities and “concentrations of poverty.”

Major changes are already under way, including a \$260 million refurbishment of the Stillwell Ave. subway stop completed May 2004 and an ongoing \$45 million renovation of the New York Aquarium. Other plans include reopening the Parachute Jump, which has been closed since 1968, and developing the “Parachute Pavilion” around the 262-foot-tall tower.

Opposition has been muted so far, mainly because so little is known about the plans. CIDC Board member Astrudge MacLean, owner of Sign O' Rama on Neptune Avenue and a resident of Coney Island for 20 years, claims, “These are not just our decisions, they come from the community.”

According to two board sources, public meetings were held in May with a “pretty good turnout” of local residents.

Even Zugin offers support for the CIDC, “They're not as fixated on the amusement park as I would have it... but what the city is proposing is pretty good. I would rather praise them.”

PRICES IRRESISTIBLE

“But all of this has heated up real estate on Coney Island,” Zigun continues. “Property

is changing hands a lot.” Landlords, like Charlie Go-Karts, are selling their land to the highest bidder. Denson told the *New York Times*: “Landowners who held on to their properties for decades waiting for casino gambling or another white knight are finding Thor's prices irresistible.”

According to the *Brooklyn Papers*, Thor has bought up vacant and built-up property from 12th to 21st street, as well as parcels of KeySpan Park.

In a feature on Thor Equities, *USA Today* wrote “[Thor] focuses on bringing retailers to blighted urban areas of primarily low-income residents.” With such enormous stakes, the low-income residents of Coney Island may be subject to more intense policing and eventually be priced out of the neighborhood (rents average less than \$500 a month).

Another real estate proposal involves Astella. According to Astella's website, it receives funding from 14 separate banks and financial institutions, including Citibank and JP Morgan Chase Bank.

With such enormous stakes, the low-income residents of Coney Island may be subject to more intense policing and eventually be priced out of the neighborhood.

Executive director Judith Orlando is a member of the CIDC, so Astella's vision — including a hotel on top of the aquarium, an Olympic-sized pool and a Business Improvement District — may find an easy hearing from the New York City Council. Under the Vision Plan, furniture stores and flea markets on Surf Avenue are expendable, as is a combined Medicaid facility and government job center that Astella wants “relocated.”

But considering the stakes, serious opposition has yet to materialize. Indeed, with no hard deadlines, the people who would suffer the most from development — low-income residents and small businesses — have few concrete plans to protest. Said Zigun, “People would petition... but there's nothing to petition yet.”

A.K. Gupta contributed to this report.



GRITTY AND TRASHY... THAT'S WHY I LOVE IT

By A.K. GUPTA

Coney Island is dilapidated and gritty and trashy, which is why I love it. It's like the Cyclone rollercoaster — rickety, loud, scary at times and a helluva good time. But who knows how long it can hold out against the spreading Yuppie blight? The invasion of big-box retailers and chain stores, the transformation of historic neighborhoods into banal tourist meccas, the dizzying climb of real estate prices are clear-cutting the city of its distinctiveness, block by block.

Now there's nothing wrong with change; New York's character is built shaped by the waves of immigrants and newcomers who have made the city a unique polyglot stew with their voices, cultures and ideas. The vitality and opportunity, the danger and gruffness, the rarefied ideas and cheap thrills excite many and horrify more. But that's always been fine by me. If New York opened its arms to everyone it would be just like every place else.

But this is precisely what's happening. The banality of suburbia has triumphed — the blank-faced chino-and-oxford clone, the lead-brained and lead-footed SUV driver, the processed-haired, wild-eyed shopaholic have made the city a bastion of their aggressive mediocrity. What culture remains has been mummified. It's been tagged, dissected and curated for tourists to gawk over.

This is what awaits Coney Island. The neighborhood is in desperate need of development. The poverty and vacant lots testify to decay and abandonment. While it's long been ignored by developers and left to die by City Hall, Coney Island still teems with raw urban life. On a typical July 4th weekend the beach is packed with people like penguins on an ice shelf. But they don't

buy their clothes from Armani Exchange, perhaps instead from one of the second-hand stores on Surf Ave.

This is the New York of the working class and the poor, whose needs and desires are ignored in the development process. And it's a crowd that's largely brown and black, which scares politicians and developers transfixed with the lure of white tourists.

Abandonment has its charms. Coney Island is not like the ur-waterfront, Baltimore's Inner Harbor. You don't have to be worried about being hassled by rent-a-cops if you don't look right, if you're a teenager, if you're not shopping, if you've got a skateboard under your arm, a boombox on your shoulder, or a beer in a paper bag. (There are plenty of real cops though.) And the boardwalk doesn't close at midnight.

Coney Island, and Brighton Beach to the east offer a wide expanse of tan sand to stake a claim amid a sea of New Yorkers. Bring a towel, trunks, some food and drink, and your only expense is subway fare for a day at the ocean. A few bucks will score you some ice cream or a cold beer from cooler-totting

Coney Island is not like Baltimore's Inner Harbor. You don't have to be worried about being hassled if you don't look right, if you're a teenager, if you're not shopping, if you've got a skateboard under your arm, a boombox on your shoulder, or a beer in a paper bag.

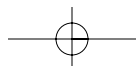
vendors trudging across the sand, hawking their offerings while dodging cops. You can spark a joint on the beach without fear of getting busted, perhaps one of the few public places in New York where it's still possible.

The boardwalk has it all — unsightly carnies, greasy food (or is it greasy carnies and unsightly food?), corny buskers, squalling children, tattooed freaks and stumbling drunks.

Coney Island has seen many changes, from a playground of Tammany Hall elite to one for immigrants and later as a cheap escape dubbed the “Nickel Empire” during the Great Depression. It's the prototype of amusement parks everywhere. But the latest change, in the words of one critic, is “planned nostalgia.” It's not about development; it's about inflating property values. According to one report, the price on 2,000 sq. ft. vacant lots has gone from \$250,000 to \$450,000 in just one year.

If the plans go through, Coney Island will be just like everywhere else — an aquatic-themed hotel, retail chain stores, “family-friendly” entertainment, corporate music venues, all the cultural and architectural clichés. The public areas will be carved into zones of private consumption. The poor will be welcome only in low-wage, dead-end jobs servicing the tourists. And the uniqueness of the area will be reduced to marketing slogans and tacky t-shirts.

At least the grander schemes — for an Olympic-facility pool, a 19,000-seat basketball arena — appear to be crashing and burning with the rest of Bloomberg's bid for the 2012 Olympics. With the demise of the West Side Stadium, there is hope that a galvanized opposition can put up enough obstacles to stem the development tide before Coney Island's seedy charm gets scrubbed away.



‘The Gas Is Ours!’

BY JENNIFER WHITNEY

After three intense weeks of stand-offs and street-fighting, Bolivians demanding national control over their oil and gas fields have emerged victorious.

The recent wave of protests began on May 12, as Congress prepared to approve a controversial hydrocarbons bill that would only marginally increase the taxes on transnational corporations (who currently enjoy the cheapest natural gas extraction in the world), rather than instituting the 50 percent tax on foreign profits advocated by the popular Movement Toward Socialism. (More radical indigenous groups have called for full nationalization of the natural gas industry.) On May 17, the bill became law, and protests grew exponentially. In the weeks that followed, a general strike was called, public transport was halted in several cities, all roads in and out of La Paz were blockaded, gas and oil fields were occupied, the airport was shut down intermittently and border crossings into Peru and Chile were sealed off.

On June 6, President Carlos Mesa announced his resignation. Next in line to succeed him was the right-wing Senate leader, Hormando Vaca Diez, rumored to have negotiated with members of the armed forces to repress protesters upon his ascendance. The people clamored for him to step aside; the next in line had already promised to refuse the presidency, which would leave the office in the hands of Dr. Eduardo Rodríguez Valtzé, chief justice of the Supreme Court. This was an option most people seemed prepared to accept – he is not

affiliated with any party, and if he became president he'd be constitutionally bound to hold new elections within six months.

Under the impossibility of convening Congress in La Paz to approve Mesa's resignation, Vaca Diez announced that they would meet in Sucre, some 400 miles away. The social movements responded immediately with roadblocks, forcing legislators to be airlifted to work, unable to travel the roads of the country they ostensibly represent.

On June 9, Vaca Diez finally stepped

aside, and Bolivia had a new president. The former chief justice, Rodríguez Valtzé, has promised to take steps toward the principal demands of the people: nationalization, a Constituents' Assembly and new elections. For the time being, an edgy peace has returned to the country.

Though President Rodríguez is constitutionally required to hold elections only for president and vice-president, many are demanding that Congress face elections as well. "The election of a new president and

vice-president won't resolve the ingovernability we've been living," says political analyst and ex-guerrilla Alvaro Garcia Linares. "It will also be necessary to overhaul Congress, and this will require a new political pact."

Not content with simply being a well-organized powerhouse in the streets that can overthrow governments, the people are taking a long view. "When we started this fight, we were not interested in changing those in the government palace," says Roberto de la Cruz, labor leader from El Alto. "The objective was, and still is, to recover the gas for the Bolivian state."

On June 10, the Coordinating Committee for the Defense of Water and Gas in Cochabamba, leader of the "water war" of 2000, issued a communiqué reaffirming its commitment to the nationalization of hydrocarbons, and "a Constituents' Assembly. It called for the Assembly to consist of "the majority presence of the Bolivian population – and not of the political parties – to design a new form of internal coexistence and social regulation for all of us, constructed by a new collective will from below."

The document continues by recognizing the peoples' victory while acknowledging that they still have much work to do toward the goal of building their own capacity to self-govern: "This has begun to happen with the occupation of hydrocarbon wells, gas plants, and refineries, and on the next occasion we must be capable of operating them ourselves for our own good."

For more info, see bolivia.indymedia.org.

POSTCARD FROM BOLIVIA

BY JEAN FRIEDSKY

LA PAZ, Bolivia—Here, "the revolution" is anything but a party. Dancing hippies, drum circles and four-story high puppets are notably absent from the recent mass mobilizations that have rocked Bolivia in recent weeks.

There are no breaks for concerts, no hemp clothing for sale. You are not an individual, but a part of your contingent, and from them you do not stray. In stark contrast to the large-scale demonstrations in the U.S. that characterized the anti-globalization movement, marches here in Bolivia are examples of discipline and seriousness.

Rigidity replaces fluidity; unity replaces individualism; rash actions are rare. The marchers have anger and determination in their hearts but reign that in for the sake of the long-term struggle.

Their intensity is in their expressions, chants and willpower – not in violent behavior. Sure, some bring their whips, dynamite is abundant and I saw one man wielding a cactus. But most of the time these are symbols of strength, rather than weapons for destruction. Without such controlled heart, the streets of La Paz would have already been stained with blood.

This article is adapted from a report that appeared on narconews.com.

comment

Nukes on Horizon

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—The failure of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in May intensified the vast, multidimensional, made-in-America character of the nuclear weapons dilemma.

The conference accomplished nothing, and the United States was the principal villain: the U.S. blocked substantive discussion of NPT issues – nuclear disarmament, nuclear arms proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Delegates spent two weeks getting an agenda adopted. Then, they went on to other procedural matters such as the organization of conference committees.

In spite of the interests and concerns of people around the world, the mass media by and large ignored the impasse and its implications.

However, representatives of non-governmental organizations followed the proceedings expertly and were forthright in their reports and assessments.

Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington, D.C., said: "The arrogant and clumsy U.S. strategy (the brainchild of former Under Secretary of State John Bolton) has most certainly reinforced the view of the majority of countries that the U.S. and the other nuclear-weapon states do not intend to live up to their NPT-related nuclear disarmament commitments."

Kimball added: "The administration's selective presentation of its record...does not hide the fact that it has taken actions contrary to U.S. disarmament commitments." These actions include "its publicly stated opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cutoff treaty, its pursuit of new nuclear weapons, and its failure to agree to deeper, verifi-

able, and irreversible nuclear weapons reductions."

Andrew Lichterman and Jacqueline Cabasso of the Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, Calif., observed that "By taking the position that nuclear weapons are acceptable tools of warfare that it will use ... the U.S. has severely undermined the NPT's status."

During the conference, a working paper proposing that parties to the NPT consider the legal, technical and political elements required for an international convention or a framework of instruments for the abolition of nuclear weapons was circulated by Malaysia, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Timon-Leste, Nicaragua and Yemen.

No action was taken on the proposal.

On May 18, the *New York Times* reported that the U.S. Air Force was seeking President George W. Bush's approval of a national security directive that "could move the U.S. closer to deploying the first weapons in space."

The U.N. Outer Space Treaty of 1967 prohibits military maneuvers and the place of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in earth orbit and on celestial bodies, including the moon. The U.S. is a party to the treaty.

On June 2, the U.N. Conference on Disarmament opened the second part of its 2005 session in Geneva. The Disarmament Conference is the only U.N. body with the power to negotiate disarmament agreements.

It too is stalled, unable to agree on an agenda or adopt a work program for the past eight years.



LOUIS PETERSON

In the June 13 issue of *The Nation*, Jonathan Schell called attention to William Arkin's scarcely noticed recent report in the *Washington Post* that the Bush administration has created and placed on continuous high alert a force whereby the President can launch a pinpoint strike, including nuclear, anywhere on earth.

This and other actions "make operational a revolution in U.S. nuclear policy," Schell wrote.

He asked: "Would the President, facing defeat of his policies somewhere in the world...actually reach for his nuclear option?"

These are insane policies and developments. They are being carried out by a group of psychopaths in the White House passing for normal. A new national anti-nuclear weapons campaign must be undertaken to stop them.

Lebanese Voters Defy U.S., Israel

BY BILAL EL-AMINE

RESISTANCE SWEEPS THE SOUTH

All quiet on the southern front this morning. There is not a cloud in the sky over my small village of Deir Kifa in southern Lebanon. You could hear fireworks and far off celebrations well into the night. Yesterday was the south's turn at the staggered parliamentary elections taking place here in the wake of the Syrian withdrawal. In an unprecedented show of solidarity, the south's Shia – 70% of the population here – came out in force to defy U.S. (and, to many, also Israeli) demands to disarm the Hizbullah-led resistance that liberated them from more than two decades of Israeli military occupation.

Everyone knew who would win well in advance – no one doubted that the alliance of the two major Shia parties, Amal and Hizbullah, would clean up. The real test would be in the scale of the turnout. The Beirut elections last week, although a big victory for the pro-U.S. Harriri list, were marred by an embarrassingly low turnout. Going into the south's elections, 6 out of 23 seats were uncontested, a whole slew of opposing candidates pulled out suddenly and a significant number of Christians were planning to boycott – all signs boding a low turnout.

Hizbullah countered this by turning the elections into a referendum on protecting the resistance, and the Shia – particularly those living in small villages like mine – did not disappoint (in one village turnout reached 93%). Voting in Deir Kifa took place in the elementary school just below our house. Early in the morning I could already hear the bustle. By the time we got there at midday, the mood among the campaigners was almost festive. At the school gate, people spoke of the need for unity at this critical time and the dangers that face the Shia if the U.S. tries to disarm the resistance.

The electoral alliance between bitter rivals Hizbullah and Amal reflected these concerns and voters rewarded them for it. While the two Shia parties have been forced by Syria to run on a single slate before, this was the first time that the parties themselves made the decision to form a united front. The poison-



June 2, 2005—A candle vigil for prominent journalist and historian Samir Kassir who was assassinated for his critique of Syria's presence in Lebanon. PHOTO: BEIRUT INDYMEDIA

ous atmosphere of past elections, many told us, had lifted as a result.

COMMUNIST CANDIDATE

The one point of contention revolved around the candidacy of Communist Party member Anwar Yassin who spent 17 years in Israeli jails for participating in the resistance. Many in the village made sure to vote for him out of respect for his sacrifice. He criticized the Hizbullah and Amal list for exploiting the resistance issue to marginalize their independent and leftist opponents.

We met some Communists from our village passing out red posters of Yassin clad in Che Guevara paraphernalia. They complained that the resistance should not be monopolized by one party (Hizbullah) or one sect (the Shia), that well before Hizbullah emerged it was communists and nationalists, Christian as well as Muslim, who initiated the armed struggle against Israel. But even the popular and respected Yassin barely registered in the final tally. The Hizbullah-Amal list won by a huge margin and turnout registered at a very respectable 45% (in Lebanon, where a huge chunk of the population has emigrated or works abroad and cannot vote, this is considered a high turnout rate).

The Lebanese elections are not over yet with two more rounds in Mount Lebanon and the north still pending, but Hizbullah has undoubtedly succeeded in using the elections to fortify its already strong standing in Lebanon. Most commentators predict that by the end of the elections, the Shia party will have increased its parliamentary bloc from 12 to 14 members. This bloc will have many allies in parliament as well as the already stated support of the Lebanese government, which has rejected the U.S. position that Hizbullah is either a terrorist group or even a militia that must be disarmed.

It is fitting that the south's overwhelming affirmation of the resistance landed on June 5, the very day that Israeli forces invaded Lebanon back in 1982. The people of the south are reminded daily – as if they need such reminders – of the dangers that Israel poses with breaches of U.S.-supplied Israeli fighter jets into Lebanese airspace. Two days after the elections in the south, as I complete this report, four Israeli jets roared low over our village as if to send a message of disapproval and defiance. The villagers below have said their piece and will no doubt stand by their word – no amount of Israeli and U.S. bullying will change their minds after Sunday's elections.

Lebanon: The Rest of the Story

BY RAHUL CHADHA

The latest turmoil in Lebanon follows decades of on-and-off conflict driven by ethnic and sectarian tensions that have been repeatedly exploited by foreign powers.

1926	1975-76	1982	1989	2000
Lebanon's constitution is drawn up under the auspices of France, which carved the new nation out of Syria following World War I. The French-influenced constitution guarantees power will lay with the pro-western Maronite Christians.	Civil war erupts between political and religious factions. Syria sends 40,000 troops in support of Maronite Christians, who are fighting to maintain political hegemony despite their minority status.	Israel invades Lebanon. The U.S. briefly enters the country but is driven out in 1983 following suicide bombings of the U.S. Embassy and a Marine barracks.	The Taif Agreement establishes a cabinet divided equally between religious factions, paving the way for an end to the 15-year civil war.	Israeli Defense Forces are driven out of southern Lebanon by Hizbollah, ending an 18-year guerrilla war.
FEB. 14 2005	FEB. 28	MARCH 14	APRIL 26	MAY 29
Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri is killed in a car-bomb, sparking massive public demonstrations calling for the resignation of the pro-Syrian government, who are implicated in the assassination. U.S. funding and support for the "Cedar Revolution" is widely suspected.	Pro-Syrian Prime Minister Omar Karami and his cabinet resign, calling for new elections March 8 Hizbollah organizes pro-Syrian rally numbering around 400,000, the largest of any thus far.	Anti Syrian rally with an estimated crowd of 800,000 to 1 million gather at Martyr's Square in Beirut.	The last 250 Syrian troops withdraw to the border between Syria and Lebanon	A four-stage voting process for the election of a new legislative body begins, to conclude on June 19.

IN BRIEF

BUSH ADMINISTRATION STRIKES OUT AT OAS

A US proposal to impose an early-warning mechanism that would allow the Organization of American States to intervene in a particular country was rejected earlier this month. "The United States wants to impose a global dictatorship," said Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez. "Behind us are the times in which the OAS was an instrument of the United States, because Latin America is not the same continent it was before."

Bush administration officials said their initiative was intended to support Latin America's fledgling democracies. Ironically, this year's OAS meeting was held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which was at the center of Bush's disputed 2000 election victory.

ALGERIAN PRESS LAWS CHALLENGED

Algerian Press Freedom Collective and Reporters Without Borders have demanded that the Algerian government stop its harassment of journalists. In a Paris press conference, the two groups called for the decriminalization of press offences. Editors and writers of top independent newspapers have been imprisoned, convicted and fined for crimes such as printing cartoons critical of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and reporting on government corruption. Four writers for Le Matin newspaper and its editor were given sentences of up to five months this past April for publishing articles exposing governmental corruption.

GERMAN SQUAT SQUASHED



Legendary German squat Yorck 59 was raided by around 500 police on the morning of Monday June 6. A popular site for political meetings, fundraising parties and cultural events, Yorck 59 was home to some 60 people in four apartments, the offices of the Antiracist Initiative and other progressive organizations, and a dance studio. The collective living and cultural project began in 1988, when activists carved apartments and office space out of an abandoned industrial building in Berlin. Solidarity demonstrations and actions of up to three thousand people were held throughout Berlin and Germany on June 6.

MEXICO'S DRUG WAR: POLICE VS. ARMY

Citing a wave of drug-related violence along the Mexican-American border, the Mexican army and federal police officers took over the border city Nuevo Laredo on June 13.

Over 720 heavily armed soldiers and federal agents began conducting highway drug searches and are in control of the entire city. They have also taken over municipal police offices and equipment, and are interrogating local police for possible narco-connections. Over the past year, more than 50 people have been executed in the area and in many cases local police are suspected to be involved.

ZAGAT SURVEY

TOP TORTURE PICKS FOR 2005

GUANTANAMO

Still the “Grand Dame” of torture facilities, Guantanamo serves up a “sophisticated offering of sadism” that’s “second to none.” From “avant-garde disorientation techniques” of white noise and sensory deprivation to the “refined classics of starvation and beatings,” “Gitmo” continues to set the standard for a “21st century gulag.” Fellow inmates may look like “Afghan farm boys,” but don’t be fooled – Guantanamo hosts an “elite clientele” with openings “rarer than a smile on Dick Cheney’s face.” For those lucky enough to “snag an invite,” be sure to ask for the “extensive menu” of “Koran desecration and abuse.” But remember to wear your “best neon-orange jumpsuit,” as the staff at “Club Dread” enforces a “strict dress code.”

ABU GHRAIB

George W. Bush may have “elbowed out” rival Saddam Hussein in managing this “perennial Mesopotamian hotspot,” but nonetheless, Abu Ghraib continues to draw throngs of “the innocent and luckless” to its “rustic” desert setting. Dishing out more “abuse and mayhem” than a “half-dozen tin-pot dictators,” Iraqis from “all walks of life” have been seen in its “blood-splattered dungeons.” From “naked pyramids” and “being covered in shit,” to “forced masturbation” and “just plain rape,” no form of torment is left untouched by an “inventive yet psychopathic” staff. While catering mostly to Sunni Arabs, “everyone is welcome” – so bring the whole family.

UZBEKISTAN

A “bold upstart” previously derided as a “rundown backwater,” this Central Asian newcomer has made a splash with its “medieval barbarisms.” Prisoners are routinely subjected to “grotesque abominations” ranging from “beatings with nailed sticks” to the “extraction of fingernails and teeth” and even being “boiled alive.” It’s become a “top-notch favorite” for the “rendition” of U.S.-held detainees, eclipsing rivals “from Morocco to Thailand.”



BAGRAM

Always offering a “hellish experience,” this torture franchise occupies a “sleepy Soviet-built airbase” at the foot of the “snow-topped” Panjshir Mountains north of Kabul. One of 25 similar “detention camps” across Afghanistan, Bagram went unnoticed until some “old-fashioned” fatal beatings of “unfortunate” locals caught the attention of critics everywhere. Some dismiss the center as a “second-rate Gitmo,” but many describe it as an “excruciating Kafkaesque nightmare” that excels at disappearing Afghans “in their own country.” Others add that Bagram has been a “consistent trendsetter,” with “abuses more disturbing than in Iraq” topped off by “no legal process whatsoever.”

SATIRE BY A.K. GUPTA

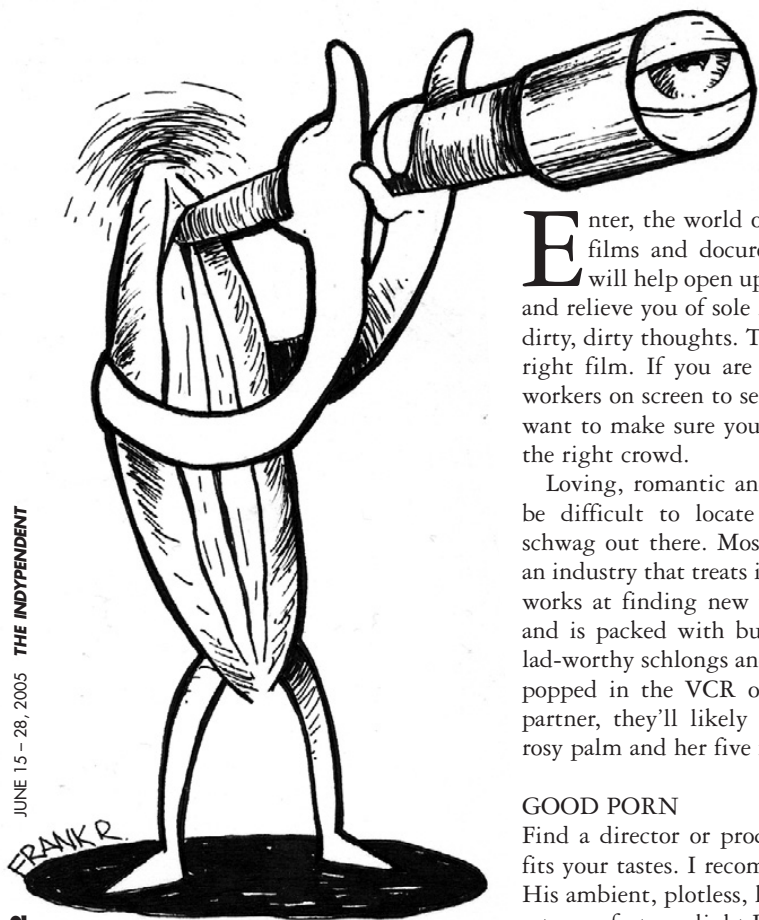
ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD

THE G-STRING

By AMY WOLF

Sex Ed for Big Kids

Sex questions are too often answered with, “talk about it with your partner,” “better communication means better sex,” or “if you can’t talk, well maybe you shouldn’t be burping the worm in the mole hole.” While this advice is true, traversing to the kinky side is not easier said than done. Unfortunately, the Puritans, aside from giving us Talbot’s and Ann Taylor, have bequeathed a set of sexual attitudes that make it difficult for a lot of couples to get beyond the sexual Neopolitan of Vanilla, Girl on Top and Doggy. Getting past this self-imposed barrier is tough because you don’t want (or feel qualified) to be the freaky one.



Enter, the world of porn, sexeducational films and docurotica. Good sex films will help open up different possibilities and relieve you of sole responsibility for your dirty, dirty thoughts. The trick is finding the right film. If you are relying upon the sex workers on screen to set a good example, you want to make sure you’re hanging out with the right crowd.

Loving, romantic and erotic sex films can be difficult to locate in the sea of nasty schwag out there. Most porn is produced in an industry that treats its workers shamefully, works at finding new ways to be degrading and is packed with bullet-proof titties, ballad-worthy schlongs and banal gang bangs. If popped in the VCR of your sexually timid partner, they’ll likely result in a date with rosy palm and her five faithful followers.

GOOD PORN

Find a director or production company that fits your tastes. I recommend Andrew Blake. His ambient, plotless, low- to no-penetration art porn features light BDSM. His impressive

back-catalog will keep you busy until he puts out a new title. Hardly transgressive, Blake displays a model-esque conception of female beauty, with lesbianism explored more for voyeurs than participants. It’s redeemed by the portrayal of these women as powerful goddesses who get what they want without lots of cock around. These films are good for couples who want to get more comfortable with masturbating with each other, using sex-toys, or who want to dabble in BDSM. Need more penetration? Mind Fucks? Check out *The Fashionistas*, produced by Evil Angel. This intense BDSM flick is not for the beginner, but actors seem human enough to relate to, and inspire couples to join in. For good gay male porn, gaypornblog.com provides decent reviews of the latest man on man flicks. Cyber-dyke.net offers hot porn by and for women.

SEX ED

The edutainment arm of the sexstructional film world is what Nigella Bites or BBQ with Bobby Flay is to your tastebuds. Enough to make you curious and hungry, but often a lit-

tle complicated for your tastes. (In fact something you might only indulge in if Nigella came over and served it up personally.) Sexperts like Nina Hartley, Annie Sprinkle and Joseph Kramer offer guides for all types of couples covering topics from better fellatio and vulva massage, to anal sex and threesomes. You can find these films in the documentary section of distributors like Good Vibrations and Toys in Babeland, or online at blowfish.com.

DO IT YOURSELF

Some sex-positive progressives enjoy DIY amateur porn. Featuring real couples instead of paid actors, this option isn’t guaranteed date material, and odds are strong that the production values will be just above what your 7-year-old nephew shot at Thanksgiving.

DOCUROTICA @#!

What? What the fuck is Docurotica you say? Think *60 Minutes* meets *Where the Girls Are* meets relationship counseling. More on that next issue kiddos....

World-class cad and lecture-circuit dilettante, Slavoj Zizek, is a willful parody of a polymorphous European intellectual who cuts pop-culture semiotics with the Byzantine discourse of the contemporary smarty-pants set. He's penned everything from advertising copy for Abercrombie & Fitch to the introduction for Bob Avakian's latest book on "re-imagining communism." Fitting, then, that his most striking book of late is the set of essays he wrote to bookend a Verso Press anthology of Lenin's writings from the revolutionary year of 1917.



Sympathy for the Devil

While Marx gets intellectual street cred for laying bare the organs and arteries of capitalism, Lenin is forever judged by his leadership of the October Revolution and the disputed legacy of the Soviet Union that followed. Where Marx is the philosopher who saw the future in the present, the decay and collapse of "real existing socialism" turned Lenin into the personification of a glorious future now far behind us. Or not, if Zizek's project of "repeating" Lenin breaks through dismissal and impotent nostalgia.

Revolution At The Gates is really two books. Several recent essays by Zizek accompany a stunning anthology of Lenin's writings between Russia's February and October revolutions. Without presenting it as a trans-historical roadmap, Zizek excavates Lenin's intervention into 1917's massive eruption of "revolutionary micro-politics," with millions in open revolt — refusing to fight Russia's wars, seizing rural lands and ignoring the official government — but hardly guaranteed any lasting victory by a left stuck trailing behind popular sentiment. The action of Lenin has resonance in this gap between the promise of the February revolution that brought down the Tsar and the second revolution in October when the ruling classes were actually overthrown.

Zizek avoids the temptation to wax nostalgic for the "good old revolutionary days" and

REVOLUTION AT THE GATES ZIZEK ON LENIN: THE 1917 WRITINGS

Ed. Slavoj Zizek
Verso, 2002

instead seeks out what he calls an "existential Lenin," the revolutionary willing to risk everything, dismissive of reasonable accommodation to power as it exists and determined to make history instead of lamenting it.

Instead of a cold tactician calculating grand politics over real human bodies, Lenin emerges as

the leap from resistance to revolution, argues Zizek, is to accommodate power with the same haplessness that the Anybody-but-Bush desperation was but the most recent, and tragic, example of. It is to equate the act of revolution against tyrants with tyranny itself. Instead of "socialism or barbarism," the choice is claimed to be liberal capitalism or the gulag. Every ruling class claims its destruction will leave the world in ruins. But who said the left has to agree?

“The return to Lenin aims neither at nostalgically re-enacting the ‘good old revolutionary times,’ nor at an opportunistic-pragmatic adjustment of the old program to ‘new conditions,’ but at repeating, in the present worldwide conditions, the Leninist gesture of reinventing the revolutionary project.” — Slavoj Zizek

a hard-nosed visionary, setting his sights on the emancipatory possibilities of his age that few others could see. Lenin's essays are the bridge between the intoxication of revolutionary potential, in which "everything seems possible," and the "hard work of social reconstruction which is to be performed if this enthusiastic explosion is to leave its traces in the inertia of the social edifice itself."

Zizek calls the shelving of *this* Lenin a "prohibition on thinking," where thinking is the act of creating the world anew from the material of what is. To deny

Lenin's fire burns not just the old order that wasted Europe in the first world war, but the passivity of the ostensibly radical left.

It is today, with imperialism off balance and the left largely overtaken by events on the ground, that Zizek calls for a repeat of Lenin.

He writes: "Lenin" is not the nostalgic name for old dogmatic certainty; quite the contrary, the Lenin who is to be retrieved is the Lenin whose fundamental experience was that of being thrown into a catastrophic new constellation in which the old

co-ordinates proved useless, and who was thus compelled to reinvent Marxism."

BEYOND THE ECSTATIC

Zizek is at his best when confronting the cynical opposition of popular resistance movements and revolutionary organization. Politics certainly need to be reinvented. The question of *who* will do the reinventing is as primary as ever.

Zizek's anthology is a molotov tossed at the feet of rhetorical radicals such as John Holloway, who speak of politics as an unwinnable game of moral compromise, and those leftists who so despaired at the right-wing fanaticism of Bush that they gathered like lemmings behind the pro-war candidacy of John Kerry.

The menagerie of social-democrats, hapless liberals and assorted utopians Lenin overcame (largely through the force of these collected writings) to push the Russian Revolution forward from its ecstatic potentials to actual victory should be intimately familiar to today's activists and organizers, even if their long Russian names are not. Despite a radically different terrain, the vices and virtues of the left remain remarkably the same.

After so many defeats, and with such powerful enemies, the temptation of activists to romanticize permanent opposition is real. The world is crying out for change and millions around the world are moving. The question remains the same: What is to be done? Zizek doesn't answer it,

Whistling Free Dixie

SELF-DEFENSE, SELF-RESPECT, AND SELF-DETERMINATION

By Robert and Mabel Williams
AK Press Audio CD, 2005

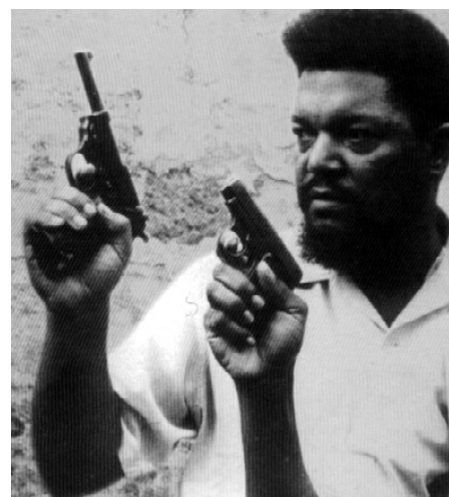
Before Seattle encouraged us to "be the media," and before Malcolm X's declaration of "the Ballot or the Bullet," there was Robert Williams. Little known in our time, Williams personified the spirit of the 1960s through his advocacy of Black armed self-defense and a DIY media strategy that made him an internationally renowned revolutionary. The release of the CD *Self-Defense, Self-Respect and Self-Determination* gives insight into one of the great formative leaders of Black Power politics.

Born in Monroe, North Carolina, Williams took to organizing at a young age. By 16, he'd led a militant strike of local machinists. After serving in the Marines during the Korean War, he returned home comfortable with a rifle and determined to defeat Jim Crow segregation. As president of the local branch of the NAACP, Williams led "wade-ins" to integrate public swimming pools while organizing armed self-defense units against the endemic Klan violence that Southern police tolerated while it came down hard on labor and civil-rights activists.

Hounded by the FBI on bogus criminal charges, Williams was received in post-revolutionary Cuba as a political exile along with his wife Mabel. Imbued with dreams of bringing the third-world revolution into the heart of America, Williams launched Radio Free Dixie, a counter-propaganda radio program broadcast from Havana into the American south. Radio Free Dixie was incendiary. Here was an unafraid Black man invoking revolutionary violence against white supremacy on the airwaves of Mississippi. Williams and family spent years in exile, with notable stops in Tanzania, Vietnam and China, where he was received as a guest of state. All the while, he published *The Crusader*, a newsletter with a formative influence on the Black Panther Party and the Revolutionary Action Movement.

The CD features rare clips from the Havana broadcasts and in-depth interviews with Mabel, who continues to carry her husband's legacy. It's amazing to consider Williams' global reach in the years before the internet. While the digital divide is often blamed for lack of access to alternative media, Williams proved that movements, not machines, are the best conduit for radical ideas.

—KAZEMBE BULAGOON



ROBERT WILLIAMS walking the walk.

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7PM • Free

Reading: *The Lives of Agnes Smedley* with
author Ruth Price

The story of one of the most significant women
of the 20th century – a flamboyant journalist,
feminist heroine, political activist – and spy.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22
7PM • Free

Reading: *Brooklyn Noir 2: The Classics* with
editor Tim McLoughlin, & authors Maggie Estep
& Luciano Guerriero

THURSDAY, JUNE 23
7PM • Free

Reading: *The Molotov Mouths:*
Explosive New Writing
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Big Mac Attacked

INTERVIEW BY MATT WASSERMAN

Taking advantage of British libel laws that put the burden of proof on the defendant, McDonald's UK got in the habit of suing its critics into submission. But two members of London Greenpeace sued by the global food giant in 1990 for their leaflet "What's Wrong With McDonald's?" – detailing the environmental, health and labor practices of the corporation – refused to apologize or back away from their claims. In the longest court case in British history, Dave Morris, an ex-postal worker and single father, and Helen Steel, a part-time bartender, put McDonald's on public trial. Representing themselves, backed only by a volunteer support team and individual donations, the duo faced down a team of high-paid corporate lawyers. In the process, they served as a catalyst for opposition to McDonald's and multinational corporations.

In 2000, 10 years after the initial suit, they took the entire British legal system to the European Court of Human Rights, which unanimously found in 2005 that their rights to a fair trial and freedom of expression had been violated. *The Independent* spoke with Dave and Helen via email on the eve of the release of the film *McLibel*, which documents their odyssey.

When you decided to stand trial did you have any idea it could serve to expose McDonald's practices to the broader public?

Once the trial started, the case really seemed to connect with people and grew into this international phenomenon. Our goal has been to point out that behind the image of the smiling face of Ronald McDonald lies the reality – McDonald's is only interested in making profits.

In the years since the trial finished McDonald's profits have dropped, at least partly due to the increasing public awareness of the unhealthy nature of junk food and increased risks of obesity, heart disease and cancer as a result of this type of diet. McDonald's have introduced so-called "healthy" options to their menus, but rather than this being through their concern for the public's health, it is merely an attempt to capture customers who wouldn't eat their usual fare.

The reality is that McDonald's trumpets every minor change and use it as an opportunity for PR and greenwash, but fundamentally the whole system remains the same.

In some ways, your campaign against McDonald's seems like a precursor of the anti-corporate globalization protests in Seattle and beyond. What do you think the link between the two is, if any?

There are definitely parallels between what activists in Seattle sought to achieve by bringing the multinational corporations under the glare of the media and what we hope to achieve every year on the 16th of October – which has been established as the World Day of Action against McDonald's – with pickets and demonstrations all over the world.

People are increasingly aware of the need to think seriously about the food we and our chil-

dren eat. Environmental and animal rights protests and campaigns are growing everywhere. People in poor countries are organizing themselves to stand up to multinationals and banks which dominate the world's economy. Why not join the struggle for a better world?

We would always encourage people to stand up to bullies – whether corporations, governments, police or whatever – and refuse to be intimidated by legal or other threats. But it's essential to get organized, to refuse to be marginalized or criminalized, and to constantly engage with wider opposition movements and the public in general. Any movements for change can expect to have to resist and overcome repression. We need to work out how best to transform court cases into arenas around which public debate and struggles can be stimulated and mobilized. "Natural justice" and "civil society" may be much stronger than we all realize. The

rulings of supposedly powerful legal, state and corporate institutions can be successfully opposed.

What do you think will be the effects of your trial(s) on free-speech rights in England?

Although we won the case in Europe the ruling actually fudged most of the issues we had argued, and as a result may not have that much impact on freedom of speech. What has had and will have a far greater impact is the mass defiance campaign which has shown that oppressive laws can be rendered unworkable if people defy them.

Two days after the Judge had given his mixed ruling in 1997, and ordered us to pay McDonald's damages, protests took place at over 500 UK stores and elsewhere around the world. Around 3 million leaflets had been distributed in the UK alone since the writs were served. This showed McDonald's that it was futile to attempt to use the legal system to silence people, and they then abandoned their original claim for costs and an injunction to prevent leafleting. They have also never attempted to enforce the damages.

Overall the case spectacularly backfired for McDonald's. They had issued legal proceedings as part of a long running and largely successful strategy of legal threats to their critics. Instead, this time the campaign had turned the tables and put the company on trial – all their business practices received massive scrutiny during the trial, and the leafleting mushroomed. They haven't issued libel writs in the UK since, and also other companies have been warned not to "do a McLibel."



MAYIMBE

McLibel Documentary Inspires

In recent years leftist documentaries have become a genre unto themselves, with the accompanying visual and narrative conventions. Those films that don't feature hand-held shots of protests too often ape the style of Michael Moore.

In bringing the story of the "McLibel Two" to film, director Franny Armstrong has managed to be muck-raking and occasionally inspiring without being derivative. While much of the material will be unfamiliar to non-British audiences, Armstrong's deft and often funny use of tactics such as covertly shot footage and court reenactments – directed by legendary filmmaker Ken Loach – keeps the film from getting either confusing or bogged down in exposition.

McLibel makes a devastating case against the effects of McDonald's on the environment, ani-

McLIBEL
Dir. Franny Armstrong, 2005

mals, public health and workers. As *Fast-Food Nation* author Eric Schlosser says, McDonald's does not offer cheap food but expensive food, food too expensive for our society to afford. Yet the film is not without hope.

Sued for distributing leaflets by a corporation used to its opponents backing down, a single father and a part-time bartender managed to engineer "the biggest corporate PR disaster in history" and helped bolster a grassroots campaign against the fast-food chain. The actions of Dave Morris and Helen Steel in turning their three-year long libel case into a public airing of McDonald's dirty laundry is living proof that ordinary people still have the power to resist multinational corporations. One, two, many McLibels.

—MATT WASSERMAN

TE RECUERDO, VICTOR

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

Chilean singer Victor Jara was South America's leading left-wing troubadour of the 1960s and early '70s, a rough equivalent of Bob Dylan or Pete Seeger. Many North Americans know his name—after President Salvador Allende, he was the best-known victim of the U.S.-backed military coup that deposed the socialist Allende in 1973—but few have actually heard his records.

Which is a shame, because much of his music was great. Wanting to create music that came out of Chilean folk traditions without being an ossified, academic imitation of the past, Jara blended the boleros and flamencos of the Spanish-guitar vocabulary with the sounds of Andean mountain music—the airy quena flute, the rippling, gently frenetic strumming of the charango armadillo-shell mandolin, and the discreet thump of the bombo drum. His songs, from lullabies to protests, playful to mournful, have an inti-

mate, late-night feel — but he always played with rhythm.

Born in 1934 in a rural village, Jara grew up in a Santiago slum. By the early '60s, he'd become a promising theatre director, but he preferred playing music. He hooked up with the nascent “nueva cancion” (new song) political-songwriters movement, centered around the Peña de los Parra coffeehouse, along with the groups Quilipayun and Inti-Illimani.

1969's *Pongo en Tus Manos Abiertas* (“In Your Open Hands”) album showed how his vision had crystallized. “Puerto Montt, oh Puerto Montt,” he cried out, lamenting a massacre of peasant squatters earlier that year. Another song, “Movil Oil Special”—its title a pun on the “Grupo Movil” riot squad—spoke of the students and young revolutionaries saying “Enough” to the “mummies and dinosaurs” of the right wing, with riot sound effects interrupting it in the middle. Released on a label run by the Communist Party's youth group, the album sold well enough

to feed the label's future. Later Jara records would make the Chilean Top Ten.

Salvador Allende's election in 1970 was a moment of hope for Chile's poor and working-class people. The new government repossessed the riot squad's water cannons and used them to supply agua to the shantytowns. Jara schlepped his nylon-string acoustic all over the country, playing festivals, benefits, and Allende campaign events. In 1971, he recorded an album called *El Derecho de Vivir en Paz* (“The Right to Live in Peace”).

That was not to be. The existence of an elected leftist government in Latin America severely vexed the Nixon administration, even before Allende nationalized the Chilean copper mines, most of which were owned by U.S. companies. The CIA funded anti-Allende propaganda and a truck owners' strike that disrupted Chile's economy. It also backed fascist elements in the military, who assassinated or jailed the generals who opposed a coup.

One of Jara's last recordings was a



funereal love song, “Cuando Voy al Trabajo.” Written in 1972 after a friend marching in a demonstration was killed by a sniper, it depicts a man on his way to work, missing his wife, and “working at the beginning of a story, without knowing the end.”

Victor Jara was murdered by the Chilean military on Sept. 16, 1973, five days after the coup that installed General Augusto Pinochet as dictator. There are varying versions of his demise, but the main story seems to be that he was one of several thousand political prisoners held in the Santiago soccer stadium. A commanding officer recognized

him, shattered his wristbones with a club, marched him out to the center of the stadium, and told him, “Now play your guitar, cabrón.” Jara began singing “Venceremos,” the anthem of Allende's Popular Unity party, a cappella, and hundreds of the prisoners joined in. The soldiers opened fire with the machine guns they called “Hitler's saws.”

Remember that story whenever you hear the names of Pinochet or Henry Kissinger.

Most of Victor Jara's master tapes were destroyed after the coup, but his CDs are available. I've seen them at J&R Music World, and a comprehensive online source is delcanton.com.

Report From Burning Man: Playa del Fuego

“Why am I here?” I ask myself at Burning Man events. It's a question sparked by my guilt and anger that beyond our counter-culture cocoon is a world at war. It was a hard fact to ignore at Playa del Fuego, the Mid-Atlantic spin-off of Burning Man, because over the tents loomed a Vietnam-era army helicopter, held up on beams but pointed nose down, as if crashing to the ground.

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

I walked to it and stood in its shadow. We spent money to come here and play in the nude as new veterans are returning from Iraq, crippled. Burning Man is apolitical. Even though most goers are liberal to Left, political responsibility frustrates pleasure, and it is pleasure, decadent First-World hedonism, that is assumed to be political in and of itself.

The DJ played a “700 Club” show in which Pat Robertson interviewed a Christian conservative who went to Burning Man. “Pat, I saw a man point his ass to the sky and tell God to kiss it,” he said to Robertson, who replied, “Praise Jesus.” He listed orgies, drug-fueled dancing and obscene art. They agreed that Burning Man threatened America.

Yet the secret of Burning Man is that it is a product of Judeo-Christian capitalist culture, not the end of it. The joy of radical self-expression could not exist without the rules that deny it. In a theolog-

ical reversal, Burning Man exposes the idolatry of Robertson, because fetishizing rules doesn't guarantee goodness. Burners break rules to release desire from shame, to expose the banality of sin. They may tell God to kiss it, but they also search for God in each other.

Why do Burners have to be segregated from society to feel connected to each other? It seems that we need to not be seen, judged and punished to allow a full acting-out of our desires. Hidden at Playa del Fuego, we let alienated desires transform us into who we wanted to be. Strangers fed each other. A sauna was built and kept going all night so people sore from dancing could relax. Drum rhythms lifted Vietnam vets, scarred and limping from war, to wave their hands in ecstasy. I saw people leaning over fire, smoke whispering around their hands. A man offered me mushrooms. He didn't want money and scooped some into my palm. I had been “gifted.”

Gift-giving is the core of Burning Man. Its founder Larry Harvey

emphasizes that what's important in any economy is the social bond it creates. In Marxist theory we each sell labor for money and in the process acquire false consciousness, because we are alienated from our labor and from each other. Gifting destroys false consciousness because you don't give what you earn but what you create and what you are. It does not define the other by what they have of value to exchange but by the value of exchanging experiences. It is why Burning Man denies vendors entrance — money would ruin it.

Harvey wants Burning Man to exist beyond its borders. Yet if it is to be more than a Saturnalia festival, a brief eruption of creativity, it must be surrounded by a sustainable economy in which common needs are met. Burning Man needs Socialism. In his 1998 speech, Harvey used the cliché of black ghetto kids creating hip-hop as an example of real connective American culture that Burning Man is continuing. Yet black ghetto kids can't afford Burning Man. When Harvey went to the desert to avoid police, he abandoned any chance for social change. The attendees who followed him choose temporary poverty, but until they connect with those forced into permanent poverty, it will be another escapist utopia of the white liberal elite. Burners know this; for all its radical self-expression, hardly any art offers political critiques. White

skin privilege and class subsidize Burning Man's existence.

I also ask if my questions hide another, silenced one. Surrounded by unbuyable love, I ask, “Do I deserve this?” For me, a politicized man of color, it's hard to trust free beauty because all the freedom one achieves in America comes with such a price. Gifting is an emotionally vulnerable act. It created a feeling that, along with the mushrooms, spread buoyant joy through my body. Some unknown man gave me freedom from myself for a night. I stumbled about laughing and crying because I was breathing air that flowed from a sky circling the earth. Yes, I do deserve this, I thought, and so does everyone else in the world, including black ghetto kids. As I danced around the fire I hoped that for a night we'd dance in the streets of New York, around a fire that burned real authority, not just its effigy. The final gift to give is a revolution.



THE BANALITY OF IMPERIALISM

CONFESSIONS OF AN ECONOMIC HIT MAN

By John Perkins
Barrett-Koehler Publishers, 2004

Long before anyone was fretting about American jobs fleeing overseas, the government was outsourcing ruling the world to American corporations. Recruited by the National Security Agency, but employed by “international consulting firm” Chas T. Main (MAIN), a defunct competitor to Bechtel and Haliburton, John Perkins wrote *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* — a first-hand account of the dirty business of imperialism.

The youngest partner in MAIN's history, Perkins traveled the world cooking up wildly optimistic economic forecasts to justify international loans for dams, power plants and other “development” projects — conveniently subcontracted to American corporations. The job of Perkins and his colleagues — self-labeled “economic hit men” — was simple: they were to get third-world countries so deeply enmeshed in debt that they would have no choice but to obey the will of creditor nations.

While tens of thousands die daily of famine, malnutrition and diseases of poverty, the third world spends more on debt service than on health and education combined. Here's why.

—MATTHEW WASSERMAN



on the street

THE INDYPENDENT

has open meetings every Tuesday at 7pm at 34 E. 29th St., 2nd floor. Call for more info: 212.684.8112

JUNE 9 - 23

\$10 general, \$7 student, \$5 senior
HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
This 25-year-old organization works to confront human rights abusers and defend basic freedoms.
ALL Screenings at Walter Reade Theater at Lincoln Center, 165 W 65th St, Plaza Level (btwn. Broadway & Amsterdam)
www.hrw.org/iff (212) 875-5600

SAT 18

7pm • FREE
READING: THE RISKS OF SUNBATHING
TOPESS: AND OTHER FUNNY STORIES FROM THE ROAD. This new collection captures the comedic essence of bad travel, and a uniquely female experience of the possible fiascos of life on the road.
BlueStockings 172 Allen St. betw Stanton and Rivington

8pm • FREE
PHILADANCO

A trailblazer in the African American dance community since 1970, PHILADANCO has become one of the country's leading dance ensembles.
Prospect Park Bandshell, Prospect Park West & 9th St. Bklyn.

SUN 19

2—6pm • FREE
2005 NYC PRIDE RALLY
Join thousands in support of gay, lesbian, queer and transgendered people.
Bryant Park 6th Ave. and 42nd St.

9am • FREE
OFF-ROAD RIDE ON OLD CROTON AQUEDUCT
Meet West 242nd St and Broadway, Bronx, last stop 1 train, next to Van Cortlandt Park.

12:30pm • FREE
SOUTH BRONX PEOPLE'S ENVIRONMENTAL TOUR
Meet at Brook Park, 141st St. and Brook Ave.

5pm—11pm \$10
ABC NO RIO BENEFIT
Charles Cohen, Chris Welcome/Mmike Baggetta, Drew Gardner trio, Diana Wayburn trio, Ed Chang, Francois Grillot/Daniel Levine, Kabloona, Jeff Arnal trio, John Hagen trio, Nick Gianni ens. Robyn Siwula, Ty Cumbie ens. Sam Newsome... and more
156 Rivington St. (btwn. Clinton & Suffolk)

TUES 21

7pm • FREE
READING: THE LIVES OF AGNES SMEDLEY WITH AUTHOR RUTH PRICE

The story of one of the most significant women of the 20th century – a journalist, feminist heroine, political activist and spy – whose liberated lifestyle stamped her as a woman ahead of her time.
BlueStockings 172 Allen St. btwn. Stanton and Rivington

WED 22

1:30—3:30pm • FREE
SHOW YOUR SUPPORT IN COURT
NY Federal Appeals Court Hearing on Voting Rights Restoration Lawsuits two landmark cases aimed at overturning New York's felon disfranchisement law, will be heard by all of the active judges of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals
Please arrive no later than 1:30
*No cells in courtroom
40 Foley Square, 17th floor (4,5,6 to Brooklyn Bridge or 1,2,3,9 to Chambers St)

THURS 23

7pm
SCREENING: In the Name of Sugar
The Ongoing Strike at Hacienda Luisita
UNITE HERE Union hall
31 West 15th St Btwn 5th and 6th Aves.

FRI 24

6.30pm \$10 advance / \$12 at the door
PARTY 4 CUBA to End the Blockade benefiting the 16th IFCO/Pastors for Peace Caravan & the 36th Venceremos Brigade.
Entertainment and food. Afro-Cuban music – Xiomara Rodriguez, Pedro Domech and DJ

COMMUNITY CALENDAR JUNE

Carlito.
Freedom Hall, 235 W 23rd St. 1/C/E train to 23rd St.
www.ifconews.org 212-926-5757

7pm • FREE
CRITICAL MASS: MANHATTAN
Union Sq Park North

7:30pm • FREE
SOULIVE / ANTIBALAS AFROBEAT ORCHESTRA
Prospect Park, Prospect Park West & 9th St., Bklyn.

SAT 25

5pm • FREE
NYC DYKE MARCH
Dykes, allies, friends and family welcome!
Bryant Park @ 6th Ave. and 42nd St.
nycdykemarch.org

8:00pm \$5-10
DYKE BALL
An event not to be missed!
Theatre for the New City 155 1st. St.

7pm • FREE
PRIDE OPEN MIC AND SKILL SHARE
Hosted by Leah, Lissy, and Jill March first.
Swap words, then stay to swap skills with dykes who know how.
BlueStockings 172 Allen St. btwn Stanton and Rivington

2pm • FREE
23RD ANNUAL MERMAID PARADE
Nation's largest art parade. See website for registration fees if you want in the parade.
Coney Island. Take D, F, Q lines to Stillwell Ave.
www.coneyisland.com/mermaid_2005.shtml

7:30pm • FREE
NEW PORNOGRAPHERS / STARS / THE SADIES
A host of indie rockers descends on the Bandshell for an early Canada Day fête.
Prospect Park West & 9th St. in Park Slope, Bklyn.

SUN 26

11am-10pm • Free
PRIDEFEST
Including vendors, music, performance and dancing
West Village, Greenwich St., Washington St. Clinton St. etc. www.hopinc.org

10:30am • FREE
BEACH RIDE TO JACOB RIIS PARK
Brooklyn side of the Williamsburg Bridge or 11 a.m. Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn.
www.timesup.org

5pm • \$5
PING PONG TOURNAMENT
A Benefit for the ABC No Rio Building Renovation Fund. All playing levels welcome! Individuals & Teams!
Sophie's Pub, E. 5th St btwn A & B

MON 27

7pm • Donation
HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE! – A Critical Appraisal of the Cuban Experiment in National Healthcare
Blue Stockings 172 Allen St. btwn Stanton & Rivington

TUES 28

7pm • \$3—5 Suggested Donation
WOMEN'S POETRY JAM & OPEN MIKE featuring stories about sexuality, sex, and gender.
Blue Stockings 172 Allen St. btwn Stanton and Rivington

WED 29

8—9:30pm • FREE
REV. BILLY AND THE CHURCH OF STOP SHOPPING
The Church of Stop Shopping holds an outrageous gospel revival service.
St Marks Church 131 E. 10th St., at 2nd Ave.
www.revilly.com

THURS 30

June 30 – July 4 • FREE
CYCLE MESSENGER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
Messenger races, cargo races, stationaly bike sprints, regular sprints, bunny hops, arm wrestling, gear fixing.
www.nybma.com

CONTINUOUS (FREE EVENTS) SUNDAYS

11am-7pm
JAY ST. MARKET– Performances, art flea market
Jay & Water St. Brooklyn.

1pm
FOOD NOT BOMBS – Cooks at ABC No Rio
156 Rivington St. 212.254.3697

2-6pm
CRAFT-ON – Church of Craft's Craft-on, weekly meeting to hang out and make stuff
325 Gold Street, No. 2, near Myrtle and Flatbush, A,C,F. 347.249.8470

4pm
FOOD NOT BOMBS – Serves in Tompkins Square Park by the Chess tables

5-8pm
BOOKS THRU BARS – Send books to prisoners. To donate email bbc@abcnorio.org
212.254.3697 ext. 323

7pm
DOC.TAILS, Documentaries & cocktails, DJ after party & drink specials
84 7th Ave. South (btwn Bleecker & Grove)

9pm
BIG BLUE KICKBALL GAME – McCarren Park
Bedford & North 11th, Williamsburg

10pm-Midnight
OPEN MIC – Spittin Devil Literary Open Mic - poetry, short stories, prose, no slam poetry, hip hop or stand up
359 Metropolitan at Havemeyer, Williamsburg

MONDAYS

7am
YOGA – Good for all levels; wear comfortable clothes in which knees can bend.
6BC garden 6th St between Aves. B&C

5:30-6:30pm
PEACE VIGIL – Across from Ground Zero
russellbranca@yahoo.com

6-10pm
PUBLIC SPEAKOUT – with No Police State.
In Union Square.

5:30—6:30pm
PLAY DIRTY – Craft night, talent optional.
Stain Bar, 766 Grand St. Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

TUESDAYS

7pm
DRINKING LIBERALLY
Progressive Happy Hour, East River Bar South 6th St, Bedford & Berry, Williamsburg, Bklyn.

THURSDAYS

8am
QI GONG – breath control, self-massage, and meditation. Wear comfortable clothes
6BC Garden 6th between B & C

3:30-5:50pm
ART AND ECOLOGY WORKSHOP – For children ages 8-12. RSVP 212.777.7969

3:30-5:50pm
PROTEST – END THE OCCUPATION, PEACE WITH JUSTICE. Women in Black, (men welcome) Israeli women for peace
14th St. & Broadway, Union Square

7:30pm
DRINKING LIBERALLY Progressive drinking hour Rudy's, 9th Ave., between 44th & 45th St.

FRIDAYS

9pm
EXPERIMENTAL ART NIGHT – Open music jam: Bring your own instruments or use theirs. Collaborative painting. Glass House, 38 South 1st Street, between Kent & Wythe, Williamsburg, Bklyn.

10:30-11:45pm
LIQUID COURAGE – Open Mic Improv Comedy Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre.
307 W. 26th St 212.366.9167

Midnight-4:30am
RIGHT RIDES – Free rides home for Women & Transwomen in Lower East Side & Williamsburg
www.RightRides.org • 718.964.7781

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HE INDYPENDENT

Out with the Old

THE INDY WINS BIG AT THE IPA PRESS AWARDS! SEE P.3

THE INDYPENDENT

Invisible Soldier

UGANDA PEACE ON ONE SMALL CORNER OF EARTH

PATRIOT ACT II BIG BROTHER JUST GOT BIGGER

THE ONLY MUSICIAN THAT